DOCTOR WHO NOVELLAS

BLOOD AND HOPE

IAIN McLAUGHLIN

Ian McLaughlin

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FOREWORD by John Ostrander

Doctor Who and the American Civil War? I don't recall seeing that combination before yet somehow it seems a natural combination to me. Back when I began working on my Doctor Who play, Doctor Who and the Inheritors of Time, I met Kimberly Ann Yale, who would later become my wife. In turn, Kim was deeply into the American Civil War and drew me into it, so much so that we toured some of the battlefields on our honeymoon as well as throughout our married life.

I have looked down the Bloody Road at the battlefield Shiloh and stood in the Hornets Den, a copse of trees where a small group of Union soldiers stopped an almost certain Confederate victory until hammered by 62 cannons only a short distance away. I walked the path of Picketts doomed charge at Gettysburg and shivered in the Devils Den despite bright sunlight. I stood where the Confederate soldiers lay behind stone walls and gazed down at the wide open slope at Fredericksberg where wave after wave of Union soldiers charged uphill to their doom with no cover and no protection from the withering fire. I sometimes think you cant understand those battles, that War, unless youve walked some of the blood stained fields. Blood and Hope, however, does a fine job of achieving that as well. The American Civil War was fought between 1861 through 1865 but its roots go back to the founding of the Republic and its repercussions are still being felt. In parts of the South the War is referred to as the War Between the States or even the War of Southern Secession and the difference is not

simply ontological. Some argue that the War was fought over the question of States Rights as opposed to Federal Rights. It was and perhaps is felt by some Southerners that the War was a matter of defending their way of life and that a given State within the Union has the right to secede when that way of life was threatened. It is certainly true that many of those who fought for the South were not slaveholders and were fighting off what they felt was an unjust invasion. For many who fought for the North, the primary motivation was preservation of the Union, not the freedom of the slaves.

However, for me this interpretation ignores the central fact that the way of life that the South was trying to save was built upon the enslavement of Blacks. The issue had been festering since the Constitution was originally drawn up. How could a people who broke

away from their sovereign nation, proclaiming We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men were created equal … justify its existence when men and women of colour were bought and sold? It could be done only by defining those people of colour as something less than human, as a kind of animal. Deny a person their basic humanity and you can justify doing almost anything to them. That fact remains true today around the world.

The dichotomy was understood by the Founders of the Republic but accepted as the price that had to be paid if the Southern States were to join this new Union. The issue remained a thorn in the Republic. Hopes that the peculiar institution might eventually fade out in time were dashed when Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin. The cultivation of cotton, now hugely profitable, demanded a lot of cheap labour and slaves provided it. Slavery became embedded in the South and its culture and economy centred around it. It certainly dominated the political landscape of the whole nation.

The South feared that the more populous North would overwhelm them in a representative government. Thats why each state had the same number of Senators, regardless of size. In the House, the number of Representatives was based on population. Each male slave was counted as 3/5ths of a man for the purpose of achieving political parity for the South even though they had not even the most basic freedoms, let alone the ability to vote.

As the nation grew and more States entered the Union, the political struggle grew more intense and heated. The South looked for slavery to extend into the new territories while many in the North looked to contain it. Moreover, the South resented the North giving refuge to runaway slaves. Compromises were made and ultimately abandoned.

The election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, whom many Southerners saw as a radical abolitionist, was the trigger to what happened next. Lincoln was personally pledged to preserve the Union and that was his main priority, even if he had to accept slavery. The South, however, was not inclined to believe that. South Carolina broke away first and, in firing on the Northern troops in Fort Sumter, started the armed conflict. They didnt wait to see what the new President might or might not do; his very election was the final insult, the last threat, they would countenance. The rest of the South followed.

lain McLaughlin, in the pages that follow, has done a fine job, in my opinion, of capturing the flavour and the passion of that terrible time. The multiple use of narrators captures the sorrow and uncertainty as

friends and families were torn apart and the nation divided. In its midst stands the Doctor and here, too, he captures something of what I regard as his essence

an underlying moral authority and a wonderful humanity. That may sound odd in describing a Time Lord from the planet Gallifrey who has two hearts and multiple physical incarnations but there it is. Slavery, which ruptured the American Republic, was at its heart inhumane and the Doctor, by his very presence, confronts it by his own insistent humanity. The shadows of slavery extend to our own time and we are called, in blood and in hope, to do the same.

John Ostrander October 2003

Part One:

The Beginning Of The War

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Natures God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

~ From the American Declaration of Independence, July 4th, 1776

We have in this nation this element of domestic slavery … …The Republican Party think it wrong we think it is a moral, a social and a political wrong. We think it is a wrong not confining itself merely to the persons of the States where it exists, but that it is a wrong which in its tendency, to say the least, that extends itself to the existence of the whole nation. Because we think it wrong, we propose a course of policy that shall deal with it as a wrong. We deal with it as with any other wrong, in so far as we can prevent its growing any larger, and so deal with it that in the run of time there may be some promise of an end to it.

~ Former Whig congressman Abraham Lincoln, speaking in Quincy, Illinois, 1858

Letter from Will Johnson to Paul LeVal Diensberg, Massachusetts
December 15th, 1860

Paul,

This letter will probably reach South Carolina before you, so I guess youll be surprised to find it waiting for you. Especially given as Im not the greatest for taking time to sit and write. You know better than most theres so many things Id rather do than sit writing letters. Even to you.

It saddens me that I have to write with such tragic news. Claires cousin, Abigail, has been struck with an ailment that might just turn out to be fatal. At the very least it looks like it will cause her severe distress for quite a time. Im no doctor but the best way I can think of describing whats ailing her is some kind of brain fever. It seems to have come on real sudden. Claire reckons she saw the first hints of it at your leaving party two days back, but she put it down to the excitement of the party and thought no more on it till I bumped into her and Abby while they were coming out of Haggans store. Id just come from seeing you and your folks off on the train and Claire and me got talking. You know Claire and me. Once we start gabbing you could have the whole 7th Cavalry ride by with the bugler playing reveille and we wouldnt notice. Anyway, Claire volunteered me to carry the results of their shopping trip

what do these girls buy that can be so heavy? She was throwing so many questions at me. How were we faring at West Point? Had we been thrown out, I think she meant. Was I keeping up with the studies? Was I still better at the military lessons than the rest of it? Did I know which regiment wed be joining? I honestly think she had me answer more questions in five minutes than our tutors did all year. Sometimes I do wonder why she and I are such good friends. Probably because shes been more of a sister to me then either of my own sisters ever were. I always thought of you and Claire as being more family than Victoria and Mary. You know fine its not that Ive got any complaint against my sisters. Its just as theyre a good deal older than me and they were both married by the time I was walking. I guess I just dont know them so well as I know Claire and you.

Which is nothing to do with Abigails sad condition. We were halfway back home and talking about how well you were doing at West Point when Claire really saw the change in Abby. Looking at her, I have to say, her condition was quite obvious. She was flushed in the face and she did not seem able to look either Claire or me in the eye.

I would never have raised the subject commenting on a ladys malady would hardly be a gentlemanly act but Claire has no such troubles. It

seems that every time your name was mentioned, Abbys cheeks grew a little redder. It is a terrible thing, cousin. This lady, who I had thought in all ways to be as sensible and level-headed as any girl I have met, seems to have quite an affection for you. She flustered and blustered under such a ferocious questioning as I have never before witnessed but eventually confessed that she had her eye set on you. And what is more, she believes that you may hold a similar affection for her.

I trust I need not say that both Claire and I spent many long hours trying to dissuade Abby of her opinion of you. At some length we discussed your many character flaws and numerous personal failings. In fact I told Abby in great detail what a low fellow you really are although I obviously did not mention any of your youthful indiscretions at a certain boarding house in Boston. But all to no avail. Abbys mind is made up and it seems none shall shake her now that it is set, although she did implore us not to mention any of this to her family yet. Out of respect for the lady and her obvious madness, both Claire and I have agreed to keep the matter quiet for now.

In truth, I fear this has less to do with you than with the unease and tension caused by last months election. Im sure you shall hear as many rumors and stories in South Carolina as we hear in Massachusetts, but I spoke with Pa today. No matter what the rumors say, he reckons theres no way Lincoln being voted President will split the country like some folks are saying. Pa says therell be some politics talked over the next few weeks and everything will be hammered out. I reckon hes right. We wont split. We sacrificed too much in becoming a country for it to be all broken up now.

The politicians will sit down and sort this out.

Hell, we cant split. Claire and me are looking forward too much to seeing Abbys Pa making you squirm. And I guess Id best warn you next time she sees you Claires got a heap of questions shes planning on throwing at you and nothing at West Point has prepared you for that. Im glad Im not the one Abbys set her stall for.

Guess Ill see you after Christmas. Pass my best respects to your folks.

Will

Letter from Paul LeVal to Will Johnson Lyon Ridge, South Carolina
December 19th, 1860

My friend,

I will admit to surprise at receiving your letter. In fact, I will admit that your letter has surprised me several times over. The first surprise is the speed with which the letter arrived, although you were wrong in suggesting that the letter should arrive before I did. I was home a full hour before the letter was delivered.

Surely this must be a record for letters between our homes?

I know I have no need to write this but I will echo Abbys pleas that you say naught to anyone about her and me. And yes, I do say her and me with reason. While I am not surprised that a sluggardly fellow like you did not notice the time Abby and I had been spending in each others company, I must confess that we were surprised that no one had made note of the fact. Surprised, and in the present situation, relieved. Had relations between North and South been more amicable I would have asked Abbys father for permission to court her before returning home this Christmas. As you surmised, our decision to wait was political. I will freely confess that I love Abby more than I thought possible but the time was not right to broach the subject with her father.

Did you ever think to hear that politics should complicate a romance so?

In my heart I hope you and your father are correct in your opinion that the nation will not split. But the South has changed, even in the past few months we have been at West Point. Where the resentment to Northern interference in our affairs simmered beneath the surface, it is now being spoken openly on the street, in railway carriages and, most surprisingly to me, in the newspapers. Many of them see the election of someone as openly hostile to the Southern way of life as Mr Lincoln as the last straw.

You know well that I have no love for slavery. I feel a deep unease at

the thought of one man owning another, regardless of skin color or land of origin. You and I, we both played with slave children when we were young. We didnt care about the color of their skin. But yet we always hid these childhood friends from our parents. I know full well that you felt the same discomfort as I when our friends bowed their heads to our parents. Father and I have argued back and forth many times the moral rights and wrongs of slavery and the only thing we can agree is that we are unlikely to ever agree on the subject. However, I can well understand why Mr Lincolns stated intention of finding a way of abolishing slavery has caused so much anger. The economy of the South is almost entirely dependent upon cotton production and the slaves are currently an integral part of that task. Im told that the slaves currently held have the worth of around two billion dollars. Most businesses believe that our economy could never survive the removal of this asset (I use the word only because I could not think of another). This feeling has passed into the public, who fear economic disaster for the South should slavery be abolished. Men fear that they will have no work and be unable to feed their families. And men with such a fear seek to lash out.

But there is more to this than just slavery. All through the train journey, I heard men, old and young alike, talk with anger of interference from the North, of the North taxing the South to death while stamping on its traditional way of life. The journey was one filled with such resentment. I desperately hope that politicians will see sense and find a way of bringing this tension to an end. May God forgive me for saying as much, but I would consider it an acceptable compromise to continue slavery for ten or twenty or fifty years more until our economy was no longer so dependent upon slaves for cotton production. I feel a great shame at appearing to set more stock by finance than the worth of human lives, but I see no other option that can bring any kind of calm to the Union. I hear that tomorrow there is to be a state convention in Charleston, South Carolina. President Buchanan is perceived as being friendlier to the South than Mr Lincoln. Perhaps he has found a middle ground for us all to inhabit peacefully before his successor takes office. I resolutely hope so, but in my heart I fear that the people here so resent the election of Mr Lincoln that the breach between the two halves of our nation may be too great for any man to bridge. If that is so, then I may not be able to return for some time. If this turns out to be the case, then I would ask you to take care of Abigail for me. I know you will do so without any word from me, but I am asking nonetheless.

I dearly hope that in a week or two we will meet at your home before heading back to West Point and laugh ourselves sore for having

thought so badly of ourselves and our fellow Americans. I so hope that saner heads than those I encountered on my journey will prevail. After all, we are all Americans.

Before I close and turn in for the night, I must comment upon your deductions about Abigail and me. You may feel a self-righteous pride at having discovered our little secret, but I feel that I should in turn let you in on a secret, cousin. I am not the only one with a female admirer. You and your dear friend Claire danced a great many dances together at the party, and unless I am very much mistaken those were far from sisterly glances she was giving you. I know she told you that she clung to your arm all evening to avoid the attentions of that unpleasant neighbor of yours, Roger Miller, but it had evidently escaped her notice and yours, I might add that the odious Roger had gone home by nine oclock, rather offended by Claires lack of interest. It seems that she may at last have forgiven you for pulling her pigtails when we were children. Of course, she is far too good for a wastrel such as you and you could never hope to deserve so charming and witty a lady but if you possess even half the sense I credit you with, you will not let her escape. I remember as vividly as if it were yesterday both of us sneering at the very thought of girls and marriage. Times change, as it seems have we.

I hope we shall all meet up again soon with happy news for us all.

Paul

Extracts from the DECLARATION OF THE IMMEDIATE CAUSES

WHICH INDUCE AND JUSTIFY THE

CAROLINA FROM THE FEDERAL UNION Adopted December 24th, 1860

The people of the State of South Carolina, in Convention assembled, on the 26th day of April, A.D., 1852, declared that the frequent violations of the Constitution of the United States, by the Federal Government, and its encroachments upon the reserved rights of the States, fully justified this State in then withdrawing from the Federal Union; but in deference to the opinions and wishes of the other slaveholding States, she forbore at that time to exercise this right. Since that time, these encroachments have continued to increase, and further forbearance ceases to be a virtue.

(P. 24)

We affirm that these ends for which this Government was instituted have been defeated, and the Government itself has been made destructive of them by the action of the non-slaveholding States. Those States have assumed the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions; and have denied the rights of property established in fifteen of the States and recognized by the Constitution; they have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery; they have permitted open establishment among them of societies, whose avowed object is to disturb the peace and to eloign the property of the citizens of other States. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain, have been incited by emissaries, books and pictures to servile insurrection.

(P. 25)

For twenty-five years this agitation has been steadily increasing, until it has now secured to its aid the power of the common Government. Observing the forms of the Constitution, a sectional party has found within that Article establishing the Executive Department, the means of subverting the Constitution itself. A geographical line has been drawn across the Union, and all the States north of that line have united in the election of a man to the high office of President of the United States, whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery. He is to be entrusted with the administration of the common Government, because he has declared that that Government cannot endure permanently half slave, half free, and that the public mind must rest

in the belief that slavery is in the course of ultimate extinction.

(P. 30)

We, therefore, the People of South Carolina, by our delegates in Convention assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, have solemnly declared that the Union heretofore existing between this State and the other States of North America, is dissolved, and that the State of South Carolina has resumed her position among the nations of the world, as a separate and independent State; with full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do.

Letter from Paul LeVal to Will Johnson Lyon Ridge, South Carolina February 14th, 1861

Will,

I dont know if this letter will make it to you. And if it does, how do you see me now? Would you still be proud enough to introduce me as your brother or am I as much a traitor to you as we hear the rest of the South is being labeled?

When South Carolina seceded, I waited for the politicians to see sense and work this thing out. But one by one, every state in the South followed South Carolina in seceding. And now I am no longer a citizen of the United States of America. My home is now part of the Confederate States of America. As has no doubt been reported, the man I now have to call president is Jefferson Davis. I dont know what this means.

You will be back at West Point by now. I could not bring myself to obey the orders instructing me to report as usual. How could I train for an army that may go into battle against my home? There are reports that Mr Lincoln is planning on sending an army against the South. Insurrectionists he has called us. But why do I say us? I had no say in any of this. I do not belong here, but nor can I leave and live in the North. Perhaps the fact which troubles me most is the relish with which so many of my fellows here in the South look forward to doing battle with the North. A newspaper headline today demanded that the North be delivered a bloody nose.

I do not know what to do. I call you my brother because in our hearts we are as close as only brothers can be. How could I contemplate a conflict which would bring me into opposition with you? And Abbys brother, too. Abby? What can she think of me now?

Perhaps I should ask, what do I think of myself? In truth, I do not know the answer to that question.

Letter never sent

Extract from the diary of Hilary Makepeace Buckley, Virginia
February 16th, 1861

Some marriages are never meant to last. They are affairs of convenience and when they prove to be no longer convenient it is only prudent that they be brought to an end as swiftly and cleanly as possible. Such a union was the linking of the North and the South. A less well-matched couple I cannot imagine. Let them and their strange ape-President do as they will, but no longer shall they impose themselves upon our freedom. This divorce is a cause for celebration, not for weeping and shame.

Letter from Claire Bartlett to Will Johnson Diensberg, Massachusetts
April 16th, 1861

Dear Will,

Forgive me writing to you at so inopportune a time. You are, I know, preparing for your graduation from West Point and following that your commission into your cavalry regiment. I hope you also know exactly how proud we all are that you have graduated so highly in your class.

Should there be any risk of your head becoming even more swollen, my reason for writing, however, is not solely to congratulate you. Abby is quite desolate with concern for Paul. She has not had word from him since he returned to the Carolinas four months ago, even though she has written him on five occasions, defying her fathers wishes in doing so. We have no way of knowing if these letters made it through to Paul, or if he is choosing to ignore them. Normally I would find that hard to believe, but there are so many things in the world these days to which I find it difficult to lend credence. Can the Confederacy really have opened fire on American troops at Fort Sumter? Can the President truly be asking for forty thousand men to enlist for a war against other Americans? Almost every man of age in town has either volunteered or stated his intention of doing so. Eli Jones, Adam and Ben Billet from the feed-store, Jude Krebbs, Charles

Eastwood even my own brother George will be enlisting next week. Roger Miller stopped by yesterday to inform us all that he had signed to the army and asked if he could write me while he was gone. I sent him away with his ears burning. I am sure I would not have been the only girl he called on with this news. Why do so many of you men see this war as an adventure, a chance to play soldier or, worse, just a chance to impress girls?

But I should not aim my anger at you. Instead, for Abby I am asking if you have heard from Paul since his letter just before Christmas. If you have not, which I feel is most likely, do you have any idea of how Abby might get word to Paul? I know that this is a difficult subject for you. Your mother told me of the beating you took from some of your classmates for defending Paul when they called him a traitor. She also told me you were stupid and tried to keep the beating secret. Your silence can only encourage those who beat you to do so again. But I am relieved that your injuries were minor. Again I am straying from the purpose of this letter. If you can help Abby contact Paul in any way she will be relieved and grateful, as shall I.

Your mother has kindly invited me to join your family for your graduation next month and I am pleased to accept her offer. I look forward to seeing you then and pray that you may have some hopeful news for Abby.

Your dear friend,

Claire

Letter to Paul LeVal April 12th, 1861

Paul LeVal,

As a senior West Point officer cadet prior to secession you are required to report with all haste to the barracks in Charleston, South Carolina by April 28th for service in the army of the Confederate States of America and the defense of the Confederacy.

Colonel Jean-Paul Levesque 3rd Charleston Cavalry Extract from the diary of Hilary Makepeace Buckley, Virginia May 10th, 1861

It is the duty of all young men to defend their homes and families in times of war.

Any who choose not to live up to that duty should be shunned and pilloried in public for the cowards they are. Our nation has broken free and our men must fight so that freedom may be retained.

Letter from Philip LeVal to Paul LeVal Lyon Ridge, South Carolina December 16th, 1861

Paul,

Today, I received a letter from your commanding officer, Colonel Jacob Wallace, a man who has been a good friend to me and to our family since many years before you were born. I am disturbed to hear from Jacob that you are failing to carry yourself as an officer of the Confederacy should. Jacob informs me that on many occasions you have openly spoken against the war and have questioned orders repeatedly. It is only by Jacobs good graces and interventions that you have thus far avoided court martial.

Your behavior is unacceptable and a disgrace to our family, which I will no longer tolerate. Your own opinions on this war are of no importance. The fact is that our new country is in conflict and you must do your duty to defend this newborn nation.

Jacob has made matters clear to me, in that you are not seen as being fit for duty with the regular army. As a personal favor to me, he has agreed that you be transferred to the command of Colonel Jubal Eustace, who is charged with recapturing runaway slaves. You will, no doubt, already have heard of your transfer and may indeed already be under Colonel Eustaces command. Eustace is, I hear, a harsh man, but has a fine military record. He will instil in you the discipline I failed to give you. I hope that under his guidance and command you may yet emerge from this war with your reputation intact. I am certain you still have it in you to set aside the embarrassment you have caused us and to become a fine officer. Please do not disappoint us or, more importantly, fail yourself, further.

Your mother and sister both ask that I pass their good wishes.

Your father

Letter from Gwen LeVal to Paul LeVal Lyon Ridge, South Carolina
August 28th, 1863

My dear brother,

I am quite lost as to how I should write this letter to you. I must tell you such terrible news that I can scarcely bear to write it, for it pains me to even think of it all. Yet you must know, even though I know how much grief it will cause you.

Our house was burned on the night of the 24th of this month. Renegades made up both of deserters from our army and some bandits and thieves had been hiding out in the woods near the house. With so many of our men away fighting, they began raiding our fields, stealing our crops and our livestock. With each raid they became bolder until they marched on the house and demanded that Papa give them food and money. He refused, of course, and held a gun on them. The few men among our older servants who still remained stood behind him. The renegades had no stomach for a fight and scattered, but as they went, they threw burning torches into the house. It took only minutes for the entire house to be ablaze.

I wish that I did not have worse news to give, but I fear that I do. When it became clear that the house was ablaze, most of us ran to a safe distance from the flames but Papa stayed in the house, trying to put out the fires, and Mama would not leave his side. I saw the roof come down on them both and I heard their screams. I cannot say how awful it was, Paul. There was nothing we could do for them. Please believe that we tried. Many times we were beaten back by the heat from the flames and a number of men were burned badly in their efforts to help them. But we could do nothing to save them. They are gone, Paul. They are buried together in the family plot.

The house is no more than a shell of cinders now. The Worsleys have taken me in and shown me great kindness, despite facing many hardships themselves.

Bringing such news to you grieves me so, Paul, but it is better this than have you ride home without knowing what has happened and find the truth that way.

I hope that you at least are well and I pray that this war will soon be over. What we began three years ago as a righteous adventure for our way of life has taken and destroyed too many lives already.

Your loving sister,

Gwen

Letter from Elias Worsley to Paul LeVal Lyon Ridge, South Carolina
August 28th, 1863

Paul,

I will keep this brief and to the point. Gwen will have told you the sad news of the deaths of your parents. The only comfort I can offer is that they died quickly and did not suffer overly. We gave their remains, such few as there were, a Christian burial and they are together where they had always planned to be buried. Their loss will be terrible for you to bear. Their deaths are made so much the worse by the knowledge that they died not at the hands of our enemies, but by our fellow Southerners. Some of the bandits have been caught and had their necks stretched. The rest we will find in time. You need have no fear for Gwen. She will always be welcome in our home.

Accept my sympathies for your loss.

Kind regards,

Elias Worsley

Part Two:

The End Of The War

Extract from the audio-diary of Peri Brown Timeframe unknown I dont know if this is a good idea. The Doctor thinks it might be useful for me to talk about what happened. To let my feelings out. Thats rich coming from him.

I dont know what to make of the Doctor. I know he cares about people. Not in that touchy-feely way you see on daytime TV. He really cares about them. Even people he doesnt know. But if I try to talk to him about how I feel now, he looks like a rabbit caught in the headlights. I dont know how to explain the way he is when it comes to just talking about feelings. Hes not a James Dean knock-off. You know the sort. Dark and brooding and mysterious, sitting there hoping some dumb girls going to feel sorry for him. Thats not the Doctor at all. Most of the time hes fun to be around. I dont know how old he is really, but wherever we land, he seems to have been there before. When hes showing us a new planet, or a star being born hes so open and happy you cant help but be happy with him. Its just when things go wrong that he tends to clam up and block people out. I used to think that maybe its because he doesnt want to let people see that hes hurting as well.

More recently, Ive started to wonder if its because he doesnt understand how we feel. He seems so uncomfortable with that kind of thing. Or maybe its because he understands emotions too well and hes scared of letting people see how much he does feel. I dont know. Mom would say its because hes English. She always said the English were emotionally repressed. But then again, Mom thinks TV shows like Upstairs Downstairs on PBS are documentaries.

But the Doctor is mysterious. I dont even know his real name. Hes called himself John Smith a couple of times, but thats not his real name. Actually, as a fake, its pretty lame. Its bizarre to think that Im travelling around the universe with a guy and I dont even know his real name. Actually, my whole life is bizarre. I travel in a spaceship that looks like a call-box and doesnt know where its going half the time with a guy whose name I dont know and my closest friend who should have been crowned Pharaoh but decided to come with us instead.

I should talk about Erimem now and what happened. Thats what Im doing here. What was it the Doctor said? It might help to get it off your chest. Clear the air a bit. Maybe Moms right. There is something old-fashioned and English about the Doctor. And Im talking about the Doctor and Mom so that I can put off talking about what happened. I really dont want to think about it. Its uncomfortable and depressing and its making me edgy already. Maybe its too soon to talk about it

but I have to sooner or later, or itll drive me crazy, you know? Of course you dont. Youre just a machine.

Where do I start? Its probably best to start with us arriving on Earth. The Doctor promised to show me the Wild West and I was kind of interested to see how America was back then. I used to watch John Wayne movies with my Dad my real Dad, not Howard

and I wondered what the real West would be like.

As usual, the Doctor couldnt tell us exactly where or when wed arrived only that it was America in the general time of the Old West. By the time Erimem and I had managed to pull ourselves into clothes that suited the time, the Doctor had already headed outside. I guess he got tired of waiting for us. Or maybe I scared him off when I said I was helping Erimem into a pair of pants. What is it they say about America and England being divided by a common language? If it comes up in conversation again, Ill have to remember that what I call pants, the English call trousers and what they call pants are underpants in the States.

Dressing is always an adventure for Erimem. At home in Egypt she wore those gorgeous dresses with ornate patterns and jewels and real gold thread woven through them but the dresses themselves were a pretty simple design. They didnt have straps and zippers and buttons all over the place, so getting Erimem into something as simple as a pair of jeans, a blouse and a jumper can take fifteen minutes of trial and error, buttons in the wrong button-holes and Egyptian cursing. She was brought up as a princess and I guess shes used to having servants help her get dressed. Maybe her decision to break away from that life is why shes so determined to do simple things like dress herself and its why she gets so frustrated when she gets things wrong.

Her first adventure with a bra had to be seen to be believed. Now that Erimems hair is getting longer, were starting to have fun and games with that as well.

So it took us a while to get ready. I was wearing a dress I was in a dress kind of mood, I guess, so Id picked the classiest dress I could find for the time we were in. Erimem? Well, she had planned on wearing something similar to what I had on but when she saw the layers of petticoats and the like she changed her mind and settled instead for a light blouse, a pair of Jeans, which Im sure came from a century after the time wed arrived in, and a light buckskin jacket. She wasnt exactly Doris Day in Calamity Jane, but she was happy enough with what she was wearing and it was comfortable, so we went looking for the Doctor after picking up a bag of gold he had left for us in the control room. Apparently the TARDIS can just manufacture gold. Or currency of any kind, come to that. Neat trick, huh?

As usual, the TARDIS had landed in the least hospitable place around. I wonder if it does that deliberately? Anyway, we had to clamber through some bushes and over a fallen tree to get onto any kind of clear ground. We were in a kind of gully lined with trees and thick bushes. Near the top of the gully we found a path. One end stretched off into the trees it looked like this forest went on for quite a way.

The other end curved towards a farmhouse, maybe fifty yards away, with a barn just behind it and a little corral in front with a couple of horses and scrawny looking cows in it. We guessed that the Doctor would have headed for the farm to see if he could find out exactly where and when we had arrived. I really hoped we were close to a town. I wanted to see a genuine Western frontier town and Erimem wanted to see what my country was like. She thought it was only fair I had seen her home, now it was her turn to see mine. Id told that her that my home was California in the 1980s, a hundred years after this, but Erimem still wanted to see. Shes kind of like the Doctor that way. Shes always excited and eager to see where we are. I guess I am, too, but Im a little more…wary isnt the word. Cautious, maybe. Ive been travelling a little longer than Erimem and I know that sometimes it pays to take a minute to stop and look before charging in.

But there didnt seem to be any danger here. What harm could there be in a farmhouse like this? We had almost reached the fence around the little paddock when there was an almighty crash from inside the barn. The door flew open and the Doctor came charging out, carrying a little black boy, no more than three or four years old.

Right behind them was a tall, black man holding another little boy, this one even younger than the one the Doctor was carrying. I couldnt see what had happened in the barn but it had this guy scared. Two bony, saddled horses were near the barn. The Doctor put the boy he

was carrying on one and climbed up behind him. We could hear him shouting at the other man to take the second horse. He seemed reluctant but another crash and a gunshot from inside the barn made up his mind for him. He threw the boy his son, I guessed up onto the horse and jumped up after him. He and the Doctor dug their heels in and their horses were turning out of the farmyard onto the path we were on when I saw two men stumbling out of the barn. They both had guns pulled and they were shooting at the Doctor and his new friend.

To be honest, my first reaction was that this was typical of the Doctor. He lands us somewhere and gets into trouble before we even have a chance to find out where we are. But as the Doctors horse galloped past us and along the path, I could see him mouthing that we should get back, that we should act like we didnt know him.

I didnt understand and neither did Erimem. But then I looked back at the house.

Under weeks of dirt and grime, the men shooting at the Doctor were wearing the grey uniforms of the Confederate Army. Suddenly, it was all real clear. We had arrived in the middle of the Civil War. The Doctor had just ridden off leaving Erimem and me alone, I guessed on the South side of the lines. And then I realised something that I hadnt ever really thought about before. It didnt matter to me or to the Doctor. I hope that doesnt matter to anybody in my own time. It was only when I saw the…anger doesnt come close…even rage is too mild for the expression on the face of one of the Confederate soldier as he ran closer, still hoping to get a shot at the Doctor, for the first time it really registered with me that Erimem was black. At least thats how these soldiers were going to see her. She wasnt white, that would be all that mattered to them.

Ive seen a lot. A lot. But when I saw the confused look on my friends face, I was more scared than Id ever been. How could I explain this to her? I hissed at Erimem not to say anything. She started to ask why not, but I cut her off. Were in trouble. Dont look these men in the eye and dont say anything. Let me do the talking.

That just confused Erimem even more but as the Confederate soldier came closer, she looked at the ground. At least Erimem knew what to do. I would have to explain who we were and how we had come to be here wherever here was but I had no idea what I was going to say to these soldiers.

Extract ends

Letter from Captain Will Johnson to Claire Bartlett Gable, West Virginia February 21st, 1865

My dear Claire,

It is some time now since I wrote you last. It is not that I am not thinking of you.

Nothing is further from the facts of it. The truth is this war has already taken such a toll on you that I am reluctant to burden you further, especially around this time of year. I know your brother would have been 23 this past week and you will all have thought only of him. Im not religious of nature but did pray for him and for you all. Especially for you. It will be small comfort, but you should know that George and others like him who have been killed in this terrible war do not die for nothing.

America will be a better place when the war is done. It has to be. I believe that in my heart. Its like a family. Two brothers can fight from dawn till sundown but at the end of it they are still brothers. And we are all Americans. I believe that. I have to or I fear I could not carry on doing my duty as I must.

I should not write this to you, but I must share it with someone and you are the only person I feel will understand. Paul is alive. I saw him yesterday. I know that Abby still holds a candle for him, but I beg of you to read this letter in full before thinking of talking with your cousin.

I was on patrol just on the Confederate side of the lines. Please do not fret when you read that, my darling. It was less dangerous than it may have sounded. I had heard of a Confederate Lieutenant LeVal on their side nearby. It is folly I know to have taken the chance that it could be Paul but the longer this war progresses, and the worse it goes for the Confederates the more I worry about Paul and his family.

Food is scarce in the South. I hear stories of women and children starving. The soldiers we capture from their side are skinny to the point that it is painful to even look at them without feeling guilt at having a full belly.

I had cut across a small brook and made my way a few miles behind their lines without too much trouble. I was out of uniform, to avoid any attention, and was looking for a house Id heard was nearby. You will laugh, but I had been working on faking a Southern accent to fit in and not raise an alarm should I have had to speak with anyone. My plan was to find the house and ask questions there about Paul and this Lieutenant LeVal. The people there would not have betrayed me to the Confederates. I may not tell how you I know this to be true but you may believe it as fact.

I had crested a small rise and was cutting through a hollow when I saw a box the like of which I have never seen before. It was a good eight feet high and half as wide. It was dark blue and had some kind of light on top of its roof. Perhaps most alarming was the wording POLICE BOX on the top of each of the four sides. I admit to being bemused by the thing but there was no other soul around and I passed on my way and made my way through the trees towards the house. I was all but clear of the woods when I saw the two horses outside the barn. The saddles, livery and brands could not have been mistaken for anything other than Confederate army. I should have turned tail and ridden for our lines but I had to know what had become of the family in the farmhouse. It will be important to us when we push the Rebs from the area. The house is clearly abandoned now with boards across the windows and doors. Seeing this set my mind to head back, but then I heard a commotion from the barn. I pulled my pistol, ready to repel any attack, but instead of charging Reb soldiers coming from the barn, I was faced with a tall, fair man dressed bizarrely in an off-white coat, striped white trousers and the darndest looking pair of boots. He was hurrying a slave along in front of him, he and the slave each carrying a colored child of no more than five years. Both were boys. From inside the barn I could hear cursing and yelling.

Get on the horse, I heard this strange man call to the slave. For a moment, I believed that the slave would refuse, but then I saw him look at the one of his sons this stranger held as he climbed onto a horse. No matter a mans color or place in this world, he will always act to do right for his children. He lifted the boy he carried onto the other horse and climbed up after him. A shot came from inside the barn, making the horses rear. I called for the men to ride towards me. The fair man thought for a second then urged his stolen mount towards me. His companion had no choice but to follow. Two young women, one white, the other a most striking colored girl, were walking towards the house. I saw the fair-haired man mouth something to them as he passed. It was clear that he knew them. As the horses came abreast of me, a rebel officer charged from the barn,

firing his pistol at the fleeing men. He was haggard and looked as if he had been in the saddle for many a month. He was in some disarray and, thankfully, his shooting was similarly poor. For a moment, I thought of the young women the fair haired man was leaving behind but they were too close to the Reb officer for me to help now. I felt bad at leaving them and in truth I fear for them, for the Reb had the look of the possessed in his eyes. His eyes burned with a hatred I have seen in only a few Rebs. But I could do nothing for them. They would have to fend for themselves. I looked back one last time, as I turned my horse to follow the fleeing men and lead them home. It was then that I saw Paul, coming out of the barn after the Reb officer. It took me a few moments to recognize that it was him. He looked old, Claire. Old and done. He was equally as dirty as his officer and his fair hair was thick and shaggy and he even had a good months worth of beard. He was skinny, too. He was always thin but he was real skinny, like he hadnt eaten properly in a long while. And he ran with a kind of shambling limp as if his leg had been broken and not healed right. But its his eyes that got me. Im pretty sure he recognized me, but there was nothing in his eyes to say he did. I dont know how I can explain this. I have seen it before in some soldiers from both sides of this war.

He had dead eyes. Eyes that had seen too much dying and suffering. When men get to be this way, its like they cant care about anything or anybody no more. Its like the war has sucked the life from them. Thats the look that scares us most. When a man has gone so low, there is no way to tell what he will do.

I cannot tell you what to do with this news, but I would urge you not to tell Abby that I have seen Paul in a state such as this. I know she would wish to hear, but I also know how it hurt to see Paul in this condition. It might only serve to cause her more pain if she was told the truth. Perhaps it would be kinder to say only that I have sent news that Paul is alive. That is, after all, to some extent the truth of it.

I should think of turning in now. It is late and I am to ride out early in the morning. But before I go, I should tell you that I caught up with the strange light-haired man in the white clothes. Would you believe that he seems to be English? It appears that he and his two friends had become lost and stumbled over to the wrong side of the lines and in time they had become separated. The man he calls himself the Doctor, although he gave his full name as Doctor John Smith had walked into the barn just as the Reb officer was about to set it ablaze, burning both it and the runaway slave family inside. Somehow, the Doctor managed to bring a loft of hay down on top of Paul and his officer, and help the slaves escape. He is a most remarkable fellow,

this Doctor. His concern for his friends was so strong he wanted to turn his horse about and head straight back for them. In truth, I had to restrain him from doing so.

I have arranged for the Doctor to stay in Gable, the town nearest our camp. It is one of those towns whose sympathies were always for the Union but found themselves part of the seceded States. He has agreed to pitch in and help out our own medics, who are always overworked to the point of exhaustion, but there was a price for the Doctors help. We must do all we can to help him find the two young women he left behind. I agreed to his terms. We need all the doctors we can get. I will keep my side of the bargain and check our intelligence for word of these women. For their sake, I hope they are as smart and resourceful as the Doctor claims. I would not like to think how things would turn out for them if they were not.

Now I must try for some sleep. You are in my thoughts every day and I pray that this terrible war will soon be over. The South is starving and all but broken. Word is that we are close to crushing the Rebs. I take no satisfaction in that. But if that is what it takes to bring me home to you, then let that be the way of it. My dearest wish is to see you again and hold you to me. Then I know that this war will be done and we can begin to rebuild our lives. I hope that teaching school still brings you the same pleasure you wrote of.

My love always,

Extract from the audio-diary of Peri Brown Timeframe unknown
Probably the biggest surprise of that day at the barn was that Erimem and I werent shot on the spot. If wed shown any sign of recognising the Doctor when he rode past, Im certain we would have been.

Instead, what we got was an irate Confederate officer desperately trying to control himself. Well, more accurately, thats what I got. He didnt even register Erimem as being there. He apologised to me for shooting when I was so close to the line of fire but said that he couldnt allow the enemies of the Confederacy to escape without giving chase. The second Confederate officer shambled up to join him. This one was younger but he moved with a terrible limp. He was filthy and he stank. It wasnt just dirt or sweat either. He smelled of something unhealthy like rotting meat or something. The older officer turned and yelled at him. He even hit the younger officer a few times. The younger one didnt flinch or step back or try to defend himself. He just took the beating. His eyes scared me. It was like nothing registered in them, as if he was a walking corpse. He didnt move a muscle in all the time the other officer yelled at him and hit him. And then the older officer turned to me and tried to put on some kind of charming smile. He introduced himself as Colonel Jubal Eustace and then the younger officer as Lieutenant LeVal. The way he talked, youd think wed just met on a casual country stroll. And the way he switched in a heartbeat from psycho to this disgusting wannabe gentleman was proof enough for me that he was dangerous. Erimem had spotted it, too. When I introduced myself, I tried to slip a little bit of a Southern hint into my accent. I spent some time there when I was younger. I was terrified that it would come out like Scarlet OHara or worse, Foghorn Leghorn. But it seemed to come out okay. Eustace didnt notice anything. I said that I was Perpugilliam Brown and that this I could have kicked myself for even thinking about introducing Erimem to somebody from the South in this time I scrabbled for something to say and finally came up with, And this is my slave, Erimem, who will keep quiet if she knows whats good for her. Eustace seemed to like that. That was something else to add to my opinion of him. He was crazy and he hated black people.

He was still trying to be charming and asked what we were doing out here. I hated doing it but I played up the silly little woman act. Not too much. I guessed that he was the sort whod get suspicious of

anything pretty quickly. I told him that wed been heading away from the fighting, hoping to find a place to buy lodging in one of the nearest towns but that we had been attacked and our buggy stolen, with all of our possessions in it. I was going to have to stop saying our. Here and now however far into the Civil War that was Erimem wouldnt have any possessions. In fact she would be a possession. All I am left with are the clothes I am wearing, my slave and a little money.

Eustace said hed get me to the nearest town. He sent the lieutenant to fetch horses from the next farm. He came back with two saddled horses and a sort of buggy pulled by another. They had to be the scrawniest, unhealthiest looking animals Ive ever seen. From the state of the horses and these soldiers, I guessed we were pretty late on in the war. Maybe 1864. Eustace told the lieutenant to tether his horse to the buggy and that he would drive me to town, but I told him that Erimem could drive the buggy. He hated the idea so I spooned on more charm, saying that I would feel much safer with two soldiers able to guard me rather than having one tied up with driving the buggy. He eventually agreed. While he was checking his saddle, I asked Erimem if she could drive the buggy. It wasnt a chariot like shed driven at home but she was sure she could handle it. I told her to just play along with the slave stuff and that Id explain later. She said quietly that Eustace was mad. I couldnt disagree with her.

Town was closer than Id imagined less than five miles but the journey seemed to take forever. I kept expecting Eustace to pull his gun and tell us he knew we were fakes. But we made it to town Buckley, it was called. It wasnt exactly big, but it wasnt a single wooden street like you see in the old Westerns either. The buildings were mainly brick built, and it looked like it had been a growing town before the war. Now, a lot of the buildings on the edge of town were boarded over and deserted and there was almost no livestock in any of the fields we drove past.

Eustace stopped in front of a two-storey red-bricked building. If it had been kept properly, it would have been a beautiful house. But the paint was chipped, the flowerbeds were untidy and you got the feeling that whoever lived there hadnt been able to keep up with the place, or that they didnt have the money to have it done any more.

The house was owned by a short woman really short, a good four inches under five feet who dressed all in black. Her name was Hilary Makepeace. To me she was the way I always imagined Queen Victoria looked. She was a sour old crone and she hated the North with a passion. Probably the only thing she felt any passion about in her life.

It was clear that she didnt care for Erimem either, or any of her kind, as the old witch put it. She gave herself real airs and graces and made out that taking in lodgers was beneath her. Apparently she was only doing it because the war had made times so hard for her. Something else she blamed the North for. She asked if I could pay so I showed her the bag of gold the Doctor had left out. Her eyes almost came out on stalks. So did Eustaces. I acted every bit as grand as the frigid dwarf and told her Id want three rooms a room for myself, one for my slave and a parlour of my own. She choked at the idea of Erimem sleeping in her house, let alone one of her beds, but she needed the gold so she agreed.

Eustace said hed leave me to settle in and that hed have someone come over to evaluate the gold. As soon as he mentioned the gold, I knew Id made a mistake. He was crazy but he was greedy too. This was a lot of gold, even in my time. It was probably a small fortune now. Eustace would be back. Probably with that creepy lieutenant in tow. Id never heard him speak. He hadnt even made a sound when Eustace was hitting him. I really didnt want to see either of them again.

Mrs Makepeace led me inside. I could have hit her when she told me to have my nigger follow. I hate that word. Ive heard that, a little after my time, some black people are taking the word back and using it themselves. Times change. So do attitudes to words. In this time, I think colored was the polite term used. In my time, its black. In the future, who knows? Maybe well be lucky and we wont go looking for names to pick out the differences in people. But Ill always hate that word.

For now, there was nothing I could do except settle in here and find out exactly where and when we were. Oh, and explain everything to Erimem. I didnt know quite how a Pharaoh was going to take to being a slave. Probably not easily. We had to find some way of getting to the

North ideally before Eustace came back.

Extract ends

Extract from the Gable Clarion Issue dated March 17th, 1865

Mrs Gloria Wallace, wife of Gables mayor, Clark Wallace, was delivered of a baby boy, their third son, late on the evening of March 15th. The infant, to be named Abraham after the President of the nation, weighed a fine and healthy 7 pounds and 10

ounces. Doctor John Smith, a recent addition to the practice of Doctor Lewis, was pleased to pronounce that both mother and child were in excellent health and spirits.

Letter from General Morris Heggie to Captain Will Johnson
Washington D.C. March 19th, 1865

Captain Johnson,

Further to your request for new recruit, Private Moses Smith, to be seconded to your command, due to your active part in the emancipation of Private Smith, your request is granted.

Regards,

General Morris Heggie

P.S. I saw your Pa while I was through in Massachusetts a few weeks back, Will. He looks well, all things considered. Sends the message for you to keep your head low.

just for once, do as your Pa says. Hell make my life Hell for sure if you dont.

Extract from the diary of Hilary Makepeace March 20th, 1865

That I find myself reduced to circumstances such as these is beyond tolerance. I would never have thought to have had a negress in my home. She has light skin for a nigger she may even be a quadroon but a nigger she remains. Of her kind, she is pleasant enough, I would suppose, and seems content to know her place tending to the needs of her mistress. The Brown woman I cannot take to. She has an arrogance and conceit ill-becoming in a lady. I also find myself wondering where she has acquired her stock of gold. Something is terribly wrong with that woman and I should like to know what that is. She is certainly plain and no great beauty. I cannot understand why an upstanding officer such as Colonel Eustace has such an interest in her. I have a strong dislike for this woman. Would that I could tell her to take her nigger and go. My hatred for the North and the ape who presides over it grows more fervent with each day that woman spends under my roof.

Extract from the audio-diary of Peri Brown Timeframe unknown For a while I thought we might be able to sit out the war there in Buckley. Im no expert on history and Howards interests were in something a lot older than the Civil War. But Id studied the Civil War in high school like every other kid and I could still remember most of the important dates. We were just a couple of weeks away from the Souths surrender. Less than a month, if my memory was right. We had the money to stay here until the end of the war and then head back to where the TARDIS

had landed. The Doctor was sure to head back there and then we could get away from this place and maybe go somewhere fun.

The Makepeace woman was even more of a horror-story than Id

thought. She hated me for some reason and Erimem she treated worse than a dog. Do you believe she wanted Erimem to sleep on the floor rather than in one of her beds? She said, How can I expect respectable white folk to sleep in a bed a niggers spent the night in? We eventually had to pay double for Erimem to have a bed. A hundred years on and Martin Luther King would have his dream. Im amazed we got so far in a hundred years with people like Makepeace around.

I explained the Civil War, its background, slavery and as much of the time as I could remember from school to Erimem. She asked a lot of questions but she pretty much took most of it in. Shes a sponge for information. She was sure we could see out a few weeks. She was kind of viewing it as a game. Shed had slaves back in the palace at Thebes. I think she was looking forward to playing the part of a slave for a while.

We did okay for a few days. We stayed in our rooms as much as we could. Whenever Makepeace or anybody else came in, Erimem slipped into the part of a slave, either sitting quietly or tidying things away. She was enjoying it. A couple of times I caught her fighting back smirks. A man from the bank arrived Eustace had sent him

and he changed some of the gold for cash. We kept most of the gold held back but we got more than enough to get us some new clothes and to pay that crone, Makepeace. The clothes were fairly drab the blockades meant that even basic clothing was pretty scarce.

Wed been in the old witchs house for three days when things started going wrong.

Id just started to think that maybe we wouldnt have to see Eustace again when he showed up. It was late in the afternoon and wed decided to bug our landlady by demanding tea. For what we were paying, she should have been serving champagne and caviar. I was on my own in our parlour when Eustace arrived. Erimem was in her room, changing into a more comfortable dress. Eustace had left that goofy lieutenant of his outside and he had a bunch of flowers. Hed made the effort to tidy himself up, too.

A clean well, ish uniform, washed hair, trimmed beard. Hed made the effort. Now he looked like a crazy guy making the effort to look sane. If I hadnt known how crazy he was, it might have looked comical. Instead, it just made my skin crawl, especially when I saw the flowers. A Southern man of this time wouldnt bring a woman flowers unless he had some kind of romantic interest in her. He was crazy and

he was disgusting and he was dangerous. I know I dont look like the back end of a bus, but Im not swollen-headed enough to think he was there just for me. Id made a mistake in letting him see the gold. I could almost smell the greed coming from him. I had to put a stop to this before he really started to be a problem.

Eustace said that he hoped that he wasnt being presumptuous in visiting unannounced.

I cant begin to describe how forced his efforts at Southern charm were. I told him that I had no objection, but that Mrs Makepeace might not approve of us being here together unchaperoned. And then I dropped in what I hoped would be the killer. I said, And of course my fiancée might object if he found out. But he is an old-fashioned sort.

Youd think Id slapped Eustace the way he stepped back. He said something like, You must forgive me, Miss Brown. I had no idea that you were betrothed. He looked at my left hand suspiciously then went on. When I saw no ring on your finger, I assumed that you had not been spoken for. I told him that my engagement ring had been stolen along with all my other possessions. He nodded but I could see that he was fuming. He was angry that I was engaged to someone else. He was struggling to keep a lid on his temper. I could see it in his eyes and in the way his whole posture had gone rigid.

Id never seen anybody so angry before. When he talked, his mouth barely moved. Your fiancée must be a remarkable man, was all he could say.

Erimem had no way of knowing that Eustace was here. She sort of bounced out of her room, all smiles, asking what I thought of her dress. She stopped in her tracks and the smiles vanished when she saw Eustace. I thought he was going to explode. His face went scarlet and his hand twitched towards his holster. I was certain hed have killed her there and then, just for interrupting us, so I stepped forward and slapped Erimem hard. And it was loud. Its a cliché but it did sound like a shot being fired.

Erimem reeled back.

Ive told you before to knock before you enter a room, I yelled at her. She just stared at me. I shouted at her to go to her room and she ran off. I was shaking as much as she was but I had to carry on the performance. I apologised to Eustace for him having to witness my slaves appalling lack of decorum. He said he understood and that he

admired the way Id dealt with it. He even enjoyed watching people getting hurt. I played the upset Southern belle and told him that I was feeling quite distressed and that I felt in need of a rest. I felt like I was laying it on too thick. I mean, did women really act so helpless back then? But it worked with Eustace. He said he should be going.

I made as much small talk as I could force myself to as I showed him to the door. I was trying so hard not to seem too eager to get him out of the house. He caught me off guard when he asked my fiancées name. In fact he had to repeat the question before I answered. I gave the only name I could think of. John Smith, I said.

Doctor John Smith. Eustace nodded but I could see that he was holding back a sneer at the thought of someone becoming a doctor. He said his goodbyes and left. Before he was even on his horse, I was running back to Erimem.

She was sitting on her bed holding a damp cloth to her face. When she dipped the cloth in a basin of water there was a clear mark on her face where Id hit her. I apologised over and over. Im sorry, I said. He was going to…

She cut me off. He was going to kill me, I know. She was trying to be matter of fact about it but I could see that she was shaking. She could hardly hold the cloth.

I dont hit that hard. She knew how close shed come to being killed by a lunatic.

Shes not a coward. Shes fought in battles and raised armies. Shes a strong, confident person but Eustace was so crazy hed even shaken her.

I took the cloth from her and wrung it out then held it up to her face. We have to get out of here, I said. Hes dangerous.

Erimem nodded. He is mad, she said. Well, there was no denying that. I said that wed have to steer clear of Eustace till we could find a way out of town and Erimem mentioned that shed heard a couple of slaves talking about the underground railroad.

After Id explained that the railroad was a way north for slaves, she said that underground was a more appropriate place for a worm like Eustace and she tried to smile. It didnt quite work. We both knew we had to get out of Buckley soon. And from the expression on Erimems face I knew she didnt see this as a game anymore.

Extract ends

Letter from Colonel Jubal Eustace to Captain Jackson Price Buckley, Virginia March 24th, 1865

Captain Price,

I would be obliged if you could perform a favor for me, regarding the status of one of our soldiers. His name is John Smith and he is a qualified doctor. I am therefore not unreasonably assuming him to be assigned as a medic to one of our regiments. As this is a matter of some urgency, I will be indebted for your speedy co-operation.

Respectfully,

Colonel Jubal Eustace

Letter from Captain Will Johnson to General Morris Heggie Billingsville Prison, Virginia March 26th, 1865

General Heggie,

Since this is not an entirely official missive, do I have to call you General Heggie or am I still entitled to call you Uncle Morris?

My thanks for despatching Private Smith to join us so swiftly. I have been persuaded that he will be of great assistance to us in the days ahead. His local knowledge will be invaluable. But I must thank you more for the news that my father is well. I will admit that I have worried for him of late. I am relieved that he is still himself. If I may impose, should you see him I would ask you to relay my best regards to him and to assure him that my head is as low as my shoulders will allow.

You will know that we liberated the Billingsville Prison the day before yesterday. I am sure you will have seen the official reports. I doubt if they can do justice to the horrors we found there. You are aware that my task of gathering information affords me something of a roving commission. I have become friendly of late with a Doctor Smith, who although English has assisted our own doctors at Gable a great deal in the past few days. The Doctor is keen to be reunited with two friends

who have become stranded on the Southern side of the lines. The young women of Gable are rather disconsolate to hear that these friends are both female. The Doctor has turned some heads with his English manners. Some of the ladies take even more pleasure from the discomfort their attentions cause my friend.

When word came that the Billingsville prison was likely to fall to us, I decided to ride there at once. The Doctor elected to join me, both to be closer to reuniting with his friends and also to offer such medical expertise as he could.

It was as no prison I have ever seen. I have been inside some stinking jails in the course of this war but nothing prepared me for this. There were no buildings. It was simply an open pasture surrounded by sharply pointed wooden fences and outside that was another barrier of razor wire. The men slept in the open with no shelter of any kind other than a thin blanket, even through the winter, I am told. Thousands of them were huddled together in this squalor. They were treated like animals. No, worse than animals. At least beasts are fed and watered. These men were not. The only water for these eight thousand was a thin stream, which ran through the pasture. The water was muddy brown. Men drank from it while feet away others urinated into it. But what choice did they have? They had not been fed properly in months, if indeed they ever had. Many could not stand from hunger, their bones visible through their skin. I saw one man who measured six feet four inches, who was weighed at 87 pounds. Hunger and the foul water have brought with them disease. The Doctor fears that cholera may be rife here. If it is, it is not the only disease in this hell. Most of us wear kerchiefs over our faces to keep both disease and the stench at bay.

The prisoners are now all dressed more warmly and have fresh water. The Doctor is overseeing the preparation of a special food for them. He has said that it would be too dangerous for them to try regular food yet. He is sure their bodies have become so unused to food that they would reject solids instantly but he is hopeful that his broth will wean them back onto food. He works tirelessly with the injured and ill and yet even he at times seems in awe of the scale of the suffering here. It is as though he is struggling to come to terms with discovering that even he has limitations to what he can do.

In some perverse way, I am pleased to have been here for this, if only to be reminded of the rights of our cause. Anyone who was here will fight all the harder so that whatever poor souls languish in other camps such as this may be set free with all haste.

Now I must go. There is still much to be done here. Please pass my dearest best wishes to Aunt Margaret.

Yours,

Will

Letter from Captain Jackson Price to Colonel Jubal Eustace Richmond, Virginia March 28th, 1865

Colonel Eustace,

Regarding your enquiry of March 24th, I have repeatedly checked the records of all of our regiments and find there to be no Doctor John Smith currently serving as a medic with any regiment in the Confederate Army. Is it possible that John is the mans middle name rather than his first? If so, there is one a Colonel Ezekiel John Smith, who is serving with distinction in Blakely, Alabama despite being well past his 70th year. It is probably of little interest to you, but I have learned by chance that a Doctor John Smith has recently been assisting the Union Army and was with them when the Billingsville Prison was captured. He is reported to be quite a dramatic figure, dressing all in white.

Accept my regrets if I have failed to discover the Doctor Smith you seek. I am sure you are aware that our resources are stretched close to breaking point here.

With respect,

Extract from the audio-diary of Peri Brown Timeframe unknown We spent a week making preparations to get out of Buckley. We had to do it all a little at a time so we wouldnt attract attention. It took six days before we had the clothes and provisions wed need. Erimem had found out exactly where we were

roughly three or four days ride from Richmond. I found myself wishing Id paid more attention in history class but I was pretty sure Richmond was where we should go.

We didnt have another visit from Eustace in that time. I was certain that hed been put off by my phantom boyfriend. Erimem laughed a lot when she found out that Id told Eustace the Doctor was my fiancée. She wondered what the Doctor would do when he found out he was engaged.

If Eustace wasnt a problem, our landlady was. Mrs Makepeace was always looking for an excuse to come into our rooms and snoop around. I found her a couple of times, rummaging through drawers. She claimed she was looking for some stuff she left in the rooms. Shes a rotten liar. Shes a rotten human being. We were so glad wed be getting away from her.

For Erimems sake, I couldnt wait to get to Richmond. When it was just the two of us, she was fine the Erimem I know. But when there was somebody else around, she was careful. Being careful would keep her alive here but she wanted away from that house, that town and that damn woman.

Once the provisions were bought and stashed at an abandoned stable, we had to buy horses. Finding horses that looked healthy enough to carry us any distance was a real problem. The few that were left in town were mostly skeletons. Eventually, Erimem found a couple that looked in reasonable shape. Im pretty sure we paid at least three times what they were worth. The saddles cost a packet as well. I told the guy at the livery stable I wanted to get out of town before the Union army showed up. He didnt care why I was buying this stuff as long as I could pay. He agreed to keep the horses till dusk when wed collect them.

We should have known things were going too smoothly. Things went

without a hitch until late in the afternoon of the day we were going to skip town. We were being obvious about sticking to our daily routine and made sure that we didnt do anything unusual that would attract attention. We were so careful about it. All it needed was for Eustace not to call till one day later and wed have been gone. But he came late on that afternoon. I was at the window when he arrived with that lieutenant still with him. At least he left the lieutenant outside with the horses while he came in.

Erimem and I agreed that it would probably be best if she wasnt around when Eustace was here. There was no point in taking the risk of antagonising him, so she went into her room.

I knew as soon as Eustace came in that we were in trouble. He was trying to carry himself like a gentleman but the veneer was too obvious. He was playing a part and he was desperate for the chance to let the mask go. I didnt know what else to do so I offered him some refreshment. Isnt that what a Southern lady would do? He refused and got to the point. He had news of my fiancee. I had to act delighted. What else could I do? But Eustace said that hed found that there was more than one Doctor John Smith serving in the war and that he had to know which one was my beau. He asked which Regiment my particular John Smith was in. It was so obvious that he knew I was a fake and he still insisted on this charade. I said that I didnt know exactly which regiment Johnny was serving with, that hed written that his own regiment had been scattered more than a year before. Eustace nodded. This was a game to him. He wanted to catch me out, to make me give myself away. If I just confessed, hed have been deprived of his victory so I kept going. In the back of my mind, I still had the hope that I could talk my way out of this. But I knew that wasnt going to happen. He kept asking questions. Where was my John Smith born? How old was he? What was his middle name? Every time he asked me a question, I threw an answer back at him until he sat down on the sofa. He didnt ask permission. A gentleman wouldnt do that and Eustace wouldnt do that unless hed decided to end this little game. He told me to sit down.

It wasnt a request, he didnt say please. He just told me to sit down. So I did.

Then he talked. I have sad news for you, Miss Brown. His voice started even and calm but every now and then, there was a catch in his voice that showed that he was struggling to keep control of himself. It seems that there is no Doctor John Smith currently alive and serving in the Confederate Army. It is possible that he was killed in action at some

point in the last year. His voice was becoming brittle now like it was going to break. When it did break, I knew all his madness would spill out of him. Hed probably kill me. Maybe Erimem would be lucky and get away. He went on, At least it would be possible for him to have been killed … And then he did explode. Except that he never existed! He leaped from his chair and marched over to me. He bent over my chair, pushing his face close to mine, so close I could smell his stinking breath. You have taken me for a fool! he shouted. You have played me but I am not the idiot you presume. I know that there is no Doctor John Smith in our army just as I know that your Doctor John Smith rides with the Union. As he yelled, his spit was dripping into his beard. He was so close to going over the edge. What I would now know, he said, is if you are a spy, and I believe you are. Then he smiled. It wasnt a nice smile. And we execute spies.

If I tried to bluster my way out of this, he would kill me. If I tried to reason? He was past reasoning with anyone. I couldnt fight my way past him. I needed another alternative. A chance to think at least. I saw Eustace wince and then he stood up and started to turn, just in time for a heavy iron poker to smack into his temple. He staggered back, dazed and I saw Erimem swing the poker again. There was no fear in her face and she swung the poker like a sword. She was trained to fight like this and she knew she would win. Even if Eustace had been carrying a sword he wouldnt have had a chance. This time Erimem caught him flush on the jaw and he crumpled to the floor. Even before he was down she had hit him again, two or three times. She probably would have killed him if I hadnt caught her hand. We have to go, I said.

She stared at Eustace. He was bleeding from the temple but he was still breathing.

She said that we couldnt leave him there and she was right. We dragged him into Erimems room and used drape cords to tie him and then we tore up bedclothes to gag him. If nothing else, knowing that wed shredded some of our precious landladys best linen really felt good. We couldnt leave that lieutenant just sitting outside waiting, so I risked having Mrs Makepeace tell him that Colonel Eustace would be spending a while with me.

As soon as we knew that the message had been delivered we slipped out of the back of the house and made our way to the livery stables where our horses were waiting. On the way we picked up our provisions and changed into pants trousers for riding.

It seemed to take hours for the horses to be saddled and every minute we expected Eustace to come charging through the doors. Eventually, it was done and we rode out.

I hadnt ridden a horse like this in a long time. Erimem made it look easy.

It was getting late and it would be dark soon. We wouldnt have long now before Eustace was discovered so we pushed the horses hard to put some distance between us and Buckley. It wouldnt take a genius to work out where we were going. The news was full of the Union marching towards Richmond. It was the obvious place for us to go.

We just hoped that Eustace wouldnt be crazy enough to follow us to get some kind of revenge. Thats what we hoped. I dont think either of us really believed it.

Extract ends

Letter from Will Johnson to Claire Bartlett Richmond, Virginia April 5th, 1865

First extract

My dearest Claire,

Where do I begin to detail what has happened these past few days? So much has occurred in such a small passage of time that I can scarce keep things straight in my head. This will, I fear, be a letter of quite some length.

The war is almost done. It can be only a matter of days now till the South surrenders and this bloody carnage is over. Can you believe that I am writing this letter from Richmond in Virginia? After four years of this war, we have finally taken the capital of the Confederacy. The war is done. The Confederate army is outnumbered by four men to one, they are boxed in and their routes of supply are cut even supposing that they had any supplies, which I believe that they do not. There will be a few more battles. Even though the South is starving and broken, these are proud and brave men.

I am told by a well-informed gentleman that the Confederacy will likely surrender within the fortnight and I have no reason to doubt his word. I am only a captain in this army. Who am I to doubt the word of the President himself?

Yes, my dear Claire, in the past few days I have met with President Lincoln on a number of occasions. I have shaken his hand and he has called me Will. I had never thought that I should meet with a man every bit as extraordinary as my friend, the Doctor. But I am running ahead with my tale. Where to begin?

Word had been coming in for days of the Rebs looking to abandon Richmond. Our troops were over-running the Rebs, flanking them, too. They could not hope to hold Richmond against us. The only thing they could do was retreat from their capital. I can only imagine how it must have burned them to leave Richmond to us.

The Doctor and I had traveled to join with troops just outside of Richmond around the first of the month. He seemed to know that Richmond would fall any time. One of our spies had sent word that a Confederate Colonel Jubal Eustace had been left lying unconscious by two young women, one of them white, the other colored. When the Doctor heard this, he was convinced that these women could only have been his friends, Peri and Erimem. If I had not agreed to accompany him, I am convinced that he would have simply stolen a horse and ridden into Richmond before our troops had the city secure.

Our spys report also stated that Eustace, a man of little self-restraint under normal circumstances, had flown into a terrible rage upon regaining his senses. He had set ablaze the house the women had left him in and had beaten his lieutenant to the ground with the butt of his pistol and vowed to find these damned witches. I feared that his lieutenant was Paul, although I could not be sure of it.

There are times when the Doctor makes little sense. He said, If Peri knows her history, shell know to head for Richmond. I confess that I do not understand even half of what he says, but the Doctor was convinced that Peri would make for Richmond.

I was inclined to trust him on this, mostly in the hope that if Eustace is following the Doctors friends, I would have the chance to find out if Paul is well. I also had it in mind to repay Eustace ten times over if he had in fact beaten Paul.

And so we rode, the three of us. Me, the Doctor and Private Moses Smith. Despite his lack of training, Moses proved a most useful addition to our group. He had been raised in this area and knew the terrain. He also knew the slave railroad that ran through Richmond. He assured us that if two young women were trying to flee the city, the railroad would know of it. Again, I found myself in debt to the Doctors forward thinking in suggesting that we have Moses posted to join us. I also found myself enjoying the company of Private Smith. He is a quick-witted man who has the ability to make light of any situation. I would also say that I have never seen a man so proud to wear the uniform of the Union Army. Would you have thought when this war started that I would call a negro private my friend?

We arrived in Richmond early on the morning of April 3rd. Private Smith led us to an old house where he knew a member of the railroad had lived. Indeed, the man was still there, surprised and delighted to see his friend, and quite amazed to see him in uniform. The Doctor was quite impatient and asked the man, a Cassius Eldon, if he had heard of two young women in keeping with the description of his friends arriving in Richmond. Eldon himself had heard nothing but promised that he would put out word that if two such girls were seen that we should be alerted. But Eldons good humor disappeared with news that Jubal Eustace might be following them. Even the mention of Eustaces name brought a look of terror to Eldons face. Crazy evil, was how Eldon called him and then he added, Eustace likes to kill us colored folks. Eustace likes to kill any kind of folks. This war give him the chance to kill as many as he cared to. Hes a man I dont ever care to meet. I confess that the fear I saw in Eldons face brought a chill to

me and I thought of Eustace running from the barn when I had first encountered the Doctor and Moses Smith, and I remembered the look on his face.

Crazy evil, Eldon said. Crazy evil.

We were taking our leave of Eldon and heading on for the Central Hotel, which had been commandeered for our use, when a small colored man with half of his right foot missing cut off after he was caught trying to escape Id guess called Eldon aside. Eldon rejoined us a few moments later. I swear he was all but hopping up and down with excitement. The Presidents here, was all he kept saying, over and over.

The Presidents here.

I was taken by surprise and for a moment, I thought he was talking of Confederate President Jeff Davis who we had learned had fled the city only hours before but then the Doctor nodded. Of course, he exclaimed. President Lincoln arrives today by boat the Malvern. At this time, another of Eldons nest of informants arrived with news that the President was walking through town without an escort. The troops sent to greet him on arrival had missed him, impossible as it may seem, and he was walking through town unescorted. I mounted up immediately, as did Moses. The Doctor hesitated a moment. I could tell he was anxious to wait for news of his friends but I reminded him that my first duty was to protect my President and that there would undoubtedly still be Rebs loyal to their cause who would see this as a golden opportunity to kill the President. Something seemed to click in the Doctor and he nodded and mounted his horse. As we rode off with Moses leading the way, the Doctor said, I think to himself more than anyone else, that this was not President Lincolns time to die. It was an odd thing for him to say but I feel he means that after a war such as this, we will need the Presidents steady hand to rebuild this nation. I can only agree.

Extract ends

Extract from the Diensberg Chronicle April 6th, 1865 Kenneth Smith reporting President Lincoln walked into Richmond. To those colored thousands who met him and cheered and sang his name, he may as well have walked into the harbor atop the water without need for any boat. He shook hands with men and women alike of all colors as he made for what had been the house of Jefferson Davis. In the great throng surrounding the President, his meager guard of ten naval officers became detached and lost. Only his son, Tad, stayed resolutely by the Presidents side. Despite this, the Presidents progress was interrupted by only one slight scuffle, which was dealt with in a matter of moments.

Letter from Will Johnson to Claire Bartlett Richmond, Virginia April 5th, 1865

Second extract

We had followed Moses only a few hundred yards when we saw the President. Indeed, it would have been impossible to have missed the great man. In that grand stovepipe hat, he stood two heads taller than any of those around him, perhaps the only white face in a crowd such as I have never seen, but to a man, each of those people in the crowd was smiling. Even those women who wept as they touched his hand did so with smiles on their faces. To these people, who have suffered so much, it must have felt as if a messiah were among them. It was a mood with which I could easily have been swept along but then Moses yelled and pointed. It took me a second to make out the cause of his concern. And then I saw him. For a second I was so taken aback by the extraordinary whiskers on the mans face that I failed to see the rifle in his hand.

But only for a second. He was wearing the torn remains of a Confederate uniform and raising his rifle to aim at the President. The musket was old and had probably been by his side since the beginning of the war but I had no doubt that if it were brought to bear on President Lincoln, it would be more than capable of taking his life. I drew my revolver but neither Moses nor I dared shoot for fear of hitting the crowd.

Then we saw the Doctor lean forward and urge his horse onward. I have never seen the Doctor take reins or a whip to a horse nor dig in spurs indeed he wears none but I have never seen a man capable of drawing such a response from an animal. His horse surged forward and the Doctors white coat tails billowed out behind him like the wings of some avenging angel. As the Reb soldier steadied himself to fire, the Doctor rode by, dashing the musket from his hands and splintering it into pieces against a wall. The Reb held a look of shock on his face for a full ten seconds before collapsing to the ground where he had stood, making no attempt to escape. Those in the crowd who had seen all that had happened turned on the Reb and began to beat and kick at him with such a terrible ferocity that I found myself taking pity on the man.

The Doctor too was trying to make his way through the crowd to stop this lynching. He reached the Reb a few moments before me and was struggling to hold back the mob when the crowd became strangely quiet and a few seconds later a channel opened and the President walked through. Both the Doctor and I are tall enough, but the President stood over us as if we were no bigger than his boy. He took

in the scene for a good while, not saying a thing and then he spoke to me.

This man was going to shoot me? he asked me and I swear Claire, my knees trembled.

I am a grown man but I honestly shook when he spoke to me. I nodded and mumbled that he would have done so if the Doctor hadnt stopped him. And now you are saving his life? the President again asked me and again I could only nod. Lincoln looked down at the bloodied Reb on the ground and then he did the damndest thing. He held out his hand to the Reb and quietly told him to get up. He had to tell the man a second time before he took Lincolns hand and let himself be pulled upright. Enough Americans have died in this war already, the President told him. I see no need for you to join their number. By this time, Moses had managed to make his way though the sea of people later he would lament that he did not possess his namesakes ability for parting seas and he took the Reb off to be held at Libby Prison.

The President looked at the Doctor and me. I take it, gentlemen, that you are my escort. When we told him the truth of the matter he simply shrugged his shoulders and said that as of now, we were indeed his escort. Could I be any safer than I will be with an army captain on one side of me and a doctor on the other? And then he led us back into that great mass of people, pausing only and by my life I swear this is true pausing only to ask directions as to how we should reach Jeff Daviss house.

Can you believe the President of the United States stopping a passer by to ask for directions? The laugh he gave as he did so was so hearty, I know that the humor of it was not lost on him.

It was so perfect a time that I was surprised to see such a melancholy look fall over the Doctor. He was watching the President intently and with a depth of sadness I could not fathom. More than once I asked the Doctor why he seemed so troubled, but each time he only shook his head and said that it was nothing. After a few moments, I stopped trying to draw any answer from him and returned my full attention to the President.

Extract ends

Extract from the diary of Hilary Makepeace April 5th, 1865

My home is gone, now no more than a blackened shell. As I write, I still see smoke rising from the ruins. In town they say that Colonel Eustace set the fire but I cannot believe that a gentleman would do such a thing. In my heart I know that Miss Brown and her slave caused the fire, repaying my kindness in opening my doors to them with this act of villainy. I now have nothing save the meager savings I have managed to set aside. I am ruined. May the Lord forgive me but I hope that in his infinite wisdom he sends the Brown woman and her nigger to the hell they deserve.

Extract from the audio-diary of Peri Brown Timeframe unknown I dont know how we managed to make it into Richmond. The roads were full of Confederate soldiers and other people trying to get out before the Union army arrived. It was like the lines of refugees you see on TV. Most were soldiers but some werent. None of them looked like theyd had a proper meal in months. And they were of all ages, too. I saw some families with babies, their parents, their grandparents.

Even great grandparents, I guess. One family had an old woman in a cart, holding a baby that couldnt have been more than a few weeks old. Everything the family had been able to salvage from their home was piled beside the old woman in the cart. They didnt have a horse to pull the cart. A couple I guessed they were the babys parents were pulling it the best they could. Both of them had blood on their hands from burst blisters. The furniture in the cart looked like it was old and had been made by craftsmen. All intricate swooshes and designs. These people had money. Or at least theyd had money before the war. Now they were reduced to this.

Further on we saw another old woman. She was so old and frail she could barely walk.

Erimem stopped her horse and was going to give it to the old woman. I knew exactly how she felt. We were both feeling guilty for having the horses when these people were struggling like that. But I stopped Erimem and reminded her that Eustace could well have been following behind us. We needed the horses to get us safely to

Richmond. She understood and she agreed. But it still hurt us both to do it. Before we moved on, Erimem took most of the food she had from her saddlebag and gave it to the old woman. She held onto Erimems hand for a minute and asked Why? It was a genuine question. She really couldnt work out why a black person would give her food like that.

Because youre hungry, was all Erimem said to her. And then she pulled her hand away, gently so she didnt scare or upset the woman. Sometimes I forget that Erimems a princess. Shes my friend. She tells me the dirtiest jokes, shes saved my life more than once, shes been there when Ive needed a friend. How do you begin to explain how someone becomes your friend? It just happens. When you go through so much with someone the way Erimem and I have the Doctor, too it just kind of happens.

You know how it is. No, of course you dont. Youre a machine. How can you? Shes a chocoholic too, did you know that? Even more than me.

Erimem and I eat together, we laugh together, weve been drunk together. God, weve been so drunk together. Like that time we downed three bottles of Denebian wine sitting outside a bar on Riga, just watching the four suns set into the sea. We didnt talk much. We just enjoyed the time together. Weve had the best times together. And the worst. Weve even cried together. Shes my friend. I dont see her as a princess. And its hard to think of someone as royal when youve seen her running barefoot along the TARDIS corridors because shes forgotten again that she has to turn water faucets off and shes worried the Doctor will find out shes flooded her bathroom again. But sometimes, like then with the old woman, she does seem royal. No, regal is a better word. But then when you look in her eyes, you see that its a show. Something she does to make people feel better. I saw her do it the first time we met. She had been chased by mercenaries outside Thebes. She was terrified and looked like she was in shock, but when the Doctor drove our chariot into Thebes, she stood up and put on a performance for her people, waving like everything was fine and nothing had happened. But its all a show.

I said something like, Come on. We should get moving. If we ride through the night well be in Richmond by morning.

Erimem nodded and started her horse forward again. As she left, the old woman said, Thank you to Erimem. I wondered if it was the first time shed ever thanked a black person and really meant it.

We pushed on. Eventually we both stopped looking at the people passing in the other direction. It was almost a relief when night came and we couldnt see them so well. A couple of times, guys tried to grab our horses, but we were never in any real danger of losing them. As dawn broke we were past the lines of people leaving the city and we rode into Richmond.

Extract ends

Letter from Will Johnson to Claire Bartlett Richmond, Virginia April 5th, 1865

Third extract

I had expected us to be swept aside when we arrived at Jeff Daviss house. Sure enough, General Weitzel (the senior officer in the city) was there to meet the President but when the Doctor and I sought to leave, the President clapped a great hand on our shoulders and ushered us to join him. I will go nowhere without my escort, he said loudly. These good men risked injury to preserve my life today. It is only fitting then, that they should join me in this moment of celebration.

We were led into Daviss office a fine, resplendent place truly worthy of a president, and President Lincoln wasted no time in seating himself behind Daviss desk. For a moment, I felt sure that he would swing his legs up and plant his feet on Daviss desk but he did not do so. Instead, he crossed his legs and surveyed the room and the people in it. He said nothing for a long moment I noted he was prone to these long silences

 and then called his son to him. When Tad joined him, he asked the boy what he made of the place. The boy shrugged and told us that it was not nearly as nice a house as the one in Washington. This drew a great bark of laughter from the President, then he asked the boy that surely there must be something in the room which took his interest. The boy answered that there was and he pointed at the Doctors white boots.

Ive never seen boots like those, the boy said.

We all laughed even the Doctors sullen mood was broken. The room was filled with a laughter which most of us knew came from a relief that the war was almost done. The President ruffled his boys hair and addressed the Doctor. Well, Doctor, said he.

It seems that we have come all this way to see an extraordinary pair of boots.

The Doctor said something to the tune that he was pleased to have been of service. I think this was the first time the President had taken note of the Doctors English accent. He asked the Doctor why he was assisting the Union when England and indeed Europe as a whole had been so sympathetic to the cause of the Confederacy. The Doctor replied that he could not speak for England or for Europe, but that his own sympathies were for the entire nation. A civil war, I heard him say. I doubt if there has ever been a worse contradiction in terms.

The President could not disagree, saying that never in his worst nightmares could he have foreseen the horrors this war had brought to America nor the great number of good men who had laid down their lives on either side of the war. But he would not let the mood sour. But the suffering is almost over, Doctor, he said with great cheer in his voice. I give it a week. Two at worst. And then we have an even greater task ahead of us rebuilding this great land of ours. He picked up Tad and sat the boy on Jeff Daviss desk. When Tad here is grown, God willing he will come to me and ask if this nation was ever really at war with itself. And then he fixed us each in turn with a steely gaze. I have watched this country tear itself apart over the past five years. I intend to spend the next five putting it back together. Not as it was before but better than that, with equality for all of our citizens be they in the North or South, black skinned or white. The Almighty has seen fit to give us men this rare opportunity to shape our future and we must grasp it. He clapped his hands together. I do not know about you, gentlemen, but I relish the challenge. He has such a boyish enthusiasm that we could not be other than swept up in his good mood.

All except the Doctor, who was watching President Lincoln with that strange expression on his face again. Sadness does not even begin to cover it. He tried to force a smile but it never looked true.

The President saw General Weitzel approaching and leaped to his feet, looking like a boy caught stealing apples. Work is coming, gentlemen. Let us escape it for a few minutes more by taking a look round Jeff Daviss house. We all agreed and followed, with only the Doctor seeming reluctant. As the President passed him, the Doctor caught his arm.

Mr President, he began and then stopped, apparently forcing himself not to speak.

And then he forced the smile back onto his face. Moments like this are rare in life, he said. Enjoy them. He said this with such a depth of feeling that I was slightly taken aback. I had never seen the Doctor so moved before, even for his friends. Hold onto them and dont let go.

The President looked the Doctor long in the eye then laid a hand on his shoulder. I think, Doctor, that you must have seen some suffering yourself. But you are correct.

We have earned the right to celebrate not the defeat of an enemy but the coming of peace. And then he moved on, taking Tads hand and

leading him away through the house. I looked again to the Doctor. I understood him now even less than ever I had.

I swear he looked set to follow President Lincoln and say something more, but then he turned and stared out of the window, a look of helplessness on face. Even now I have no explanation for it. The best I can figure is that his worry for Peri and Erimem was getting the best of him. I remember hoping at the time that Eldons people would soon have news of them for us.

Extract ends

Extract from the audio-diary of Peri Brown Timeframe unknown Im not sure what I expected to find when we arrived in Richmond. It wasnt what the people leaving the city had expected. Most of them had been sure that the North would set fire to Richmond and leave the city a burned ruin no better than Atlanta. I knew that hadnt happened or wouldnt happen because the history books from my time said it didnt. But I still didnt know what to expect. Erimem had even less idea.

Id explained as much as I could about what was happening but Im no expert on history. I guessed wed have to wing it.

The plan, if you can call it that, was to find the slave railroad out of Richmond and get whatever information we could from them. We guessed that they would be operating more in the open now that the North was in charge and that theyd know the best way out of the city. They might even have been able to put us in touch with somebody in the army who could find the Doctor. It wasnt a great plan, but like I say, we were winging it.

I think Erimem and I both expected to find Richmond in pieces and full of depressed, hopeless people. We certainly didnt expect to walk into a street carnival. Even though it was still early in the morning when we rode in, the streets were already filling up. And these people werent like the ones wed seen on the road. These people were happy. They were cheering and singing and every time a soldier in a blue uniform was spotted, they cheered louder. It reminded me of a documentary Id seen on TV of when the Allies had recaptured Paris in 1945. Erimem said it was like a time when she was little and her father the Pharaoh I guess had come back after winning some war hed been fighting. Against the Hyksos, I think she said. It does make me wonder if weve changed at all in, what? Three and a half thousand years? People needed to celebrate then just like they do in my time.

And we still fight wars and kill people like they did back then. We just have better weapons to do it with.

The crowds got thicker the further we got into Richmond. Most of the people celebrating in the streets were black and they had more right to be happy than anybody I can imagine. Theyd been slaves. Somebodys property. Not treated as people at all. And now they could

see that was all going to change. The contrast between these people and the ones wed seen on the road was amazing. The ones on the road had been looking at the end of a way of life. These people were celebrating the beginning of a new life. Even though we were both exhausted and we knew Eustace was probably on our tail, Erimem and I both felt ourselves being pulled into the carnival atmosphere.

Everybody was so happy it was impossible not to. For the first time since the TARDIS

landed, Erimem and I were both laughing. We didnt know the words to any of the songs they were singing but we joined in anyway. Nobody noticed. They wouldnt have cared if they had. They were too happy.

Wed been in Richmond for maybe an hour when we heard the chant. It took a few seconds for us to work out what it was. To begin with we were too far away, and some were shouting Lincum. Then it clicked. Lincoln. They were chanting for Lincoln. I remembered from somewhere that President Lincoln had come to Richmond after the North took it. As soon as we worked out that President Lincoln was there, Erimem really wanted to see him. She was so excited that I couldnt have said no even if Id wanted to. And I wanted to see him as well. Im not a fan of politicians at home but this was different. Who wouldnt want to see a legend like Abraham Lincoln? For some reason when I think about Lincoln I always see him as Gregory Peck. Why is that? Did he play Lincoln in a movie? It doesnt matter.

Its just as well we were on horseback or we wouldnt have seen anything. The crowd had to be dozens deep all around him. At least from where we were we could see his big hat towering over everybody. To be honest, thats pretty much all we could see.

Erimem said something like Its just as well hes so tall or wed never have seen him. She sounded disappointed that she hadnt been introduced to him personally

but then I have to remember that Erimems used to being introduced to kings and queens and having them bow to her. Meeting a President would probably be a piece of cake to her while Id be a gibbering, tongue-tied wreck.

We were trying to get a better view of President Lincoln when a black soldier in a Union uniform led a ragged, Confederate soldier past us on the far side of the street. His uniform was in tatters and his beard

and hair were filthy. He looked like he hadnt slept in a year. When he passed, he looked up at us. There wasnt any animosity in his face. In fact there wasnt anything at all. The soldier escorting him looked at us as too. It looked like he recognised us. In fact, Im sure he thought he did. I looked at Erimem and she looked like I felt. The Confederate soldier was a reminder that Eustace would be after us. There was a loud cheer from the crowd around Lincoln up ahead but the mood was broken for us. We turned our horses and headed for the house where wed been told we could meet our contact in the underground railroad.

Extract ends

Notes on arrest of prisoner, taken by Kenneth Smith Diensberg Chronicle April 3rd, 1865

PRISONERS NAME: AARON EDDOWES

RANK: PRIVATE

REGIMENT: 3RD CHARLESTON MILITIA

HOME TOWN: UNKNOWN

The prisoner was brung into custody by Private Moses Smith, who seemed real eager to be out of jail. Reckoned he had somewheres else to be. Maybe he did but we still got rules here so I made sure he done things right afore I let him go. The prisoner didnt have nothing to say so we put him in the cell. I dont know nothing about him wanting to shoot Lincoln. Ifn he did try, Moses Smith didnt say nothing about it when he brung him in.

-Sergeant Jacob Austin

There might be a story here but I cant get anything out of Austin. If somebody did draw a bead on President Lincoln, Washington would know about it. Maybe we should have some of your boys in the capital check this one out. I think Ill learn nothing more here. I cant even track down this Private Moses Smith. Nonetheless, I remain convinced that there is a story here.

Extract ends

Letter from Will Johnson to Claire Bartlett Richmond, Virginia April 5th, 1865

Fourth extract

The Doctor had shaken off his malaise and joined the Presidents tour of Jeff Daviss house. I suspect that President Lincoln has more than a little respect for Davis.

More than once he has talked of Daviss integrity and intelligence. He is, I think, saddened that he could not have met Davis man to man. Not for a fist-fight or anything of that sort. Just to talk.

The President had noted the Doctor joining us and asked him again how he came to be here. The Doctor briefly related his story to the President, who offered whatever aid he could reasonably give in the Doctors efforts at finding his friends. President Lincoln was surprised and I think delighted when he heard that while Peri was white, her friend was colored. God willing, they have survived, he said. And if they have, they may be a beacon for our future.

We toured the house until President Lincoln gave a great sigh and conceded that work could be put off no longer. He had led us part downstairs and was again heading for Jeff Daviss office when we heard a commotion from the door, where we saw Moses Smith trying to gain entry past two guards who were having none of it and resolutely barred his path. The Doctor called for them to let Moses pass and automatically added my voice to his before even thinking of where I was or whose company I was keeping. The President just nodded and told the guards to let Moses through.

Moses dealt with meeting the President as though he had done such a thing every day of his life. When introduced, he commented that even though they were both Smiths, he was no relation to the Doctor. He then told the Doctor of the reason for his urgency he had seen Peri and Erimem here in Richmond a few hours previously. The Doctors delight at hearing this news was killed when Moses added that he had made some investigations about the two women. In doing so he had discovered that they were not the only arrivals in Richmond that morning. Jubal Eustace and his lieutenant had arrived a mere hour or so behind Peri and Erimem.

Extract ends

Extract from the audio-diary of Peri Brown Timeframe unknown We found our way to the underground railroads safe-house without too much trouble.

They werent exactly advertising where it was but our contact took a lot less convincing than I guessed he would have a few days earlier. He was actually surprised that we would still be needing the railroad, now that the Confederates had gone. But he gave us the address and directions on how to get there. Maybe we looked desperate or something.

Finding the house was pretty easy but there didnt seem to be anybody home when we knocked. We were pretty much ready to give up and try something else when a man answered the door. From the way he was limping, I thought he had something wrong with his foot. And then I realised that he had only half of a right foot. A runaway slave whod been caught. Hed have had the missing part of his foot cut off to stop him running away again. He apologised for taking so long then asked how he could help us on a great day like this. He was as caught up in the euphoria as everybody else. We couldnt blame him, but we didnt want to spend all day standing around talking either so we explained that Jake Ellis, whod been involved in the railroad in Buckley, had sent us to see Cassius Eldon. Apparently that was enough for the man. He introduced himself as George Williams and ushered us inside, clucking like a mother hen. He called for someone called Michael. A few seconds later a young boy arrived.

He was maybe 15 and hed obviously been working in the stable to the side of the house. He came in, grumbling and complaining that he had to keep on working when everybody else was off seeing the President. He stopped grumbling when he saw Erimem and started trying to tidy himself up. Pretty much the typical reaction of any teenage boy when he sees a pretty girl. And some teenage girls when they see a good-looking guy, come to that. He was that uncomfortable mixture of horny, embarrassed, tongue-tied and shy. A typical teenager. The poor kid couldnt get away quick enough when George sent him to see to our horses. He almost ran out.

George started to apologise, then just shrugged and said that hed been young once.

He led us into a parlour and we almost collapsed into a couple of chairs. They were probably the hardest chairs Ive ever sat on but after so long on a saddle, it was bliss to sit on a real chair. George told us that Cassius Eldon was out looking for two girls matching our description. He asked if we knew Moses Smith or Captain Will Johnson. We didnt and said so. Again, George shrugged and said it must be two other girls theyd been looking for with that Doctor friend of theirs. The way we leaped out of our chairs when George mentioned the Doctor almost scared him half to death and he actually took a step back.

Another time, it might have seemed funny. Not then.

Erimem was asking if George had seen the Doctor. What had he looked like? What was he doing in Richmond? It was all George could do to keep up. The Doctor was in Richmond.

Hed been to this house earlier that morning asking about us before hed had to go and guard the President. Erimem and I looked at each other. Wed probably been in shouting distance of the Doctor and hadnt known it. As far as George knew, the Doctor was probably at Jeff Daviss house with the President. George was certain Cassius Eldon would know for sure where the Doctor was but Eldon was out passing word to look out for Jubal Eustace. Even hearing somebody talk about Eustace was enough to send a chill through both Erimem and me. Neither of us had any doubt that Eustace was sick enough to follow us into enemy territory to get some payback. Our best bet was to go to Jeff Daviss house. Even if the Doctor wasnt there, not even somebody as crazy as Eustace would try to start anything with so many Union soldiers around.

George wasnt sure. He thought we should wait for Eldon to come back but we were determined to go find the Doctor. After so long on the move, neither of us wanted to just sit around and wait for something to happen.

George led us through the house and across a little path into the barn where Michael was supposed to be looking after our horses. You know that feeling you get when you just know somethings not right? Youre a machine. Of course you dont. Its hard to describe. Its like a shiver or somebody walking over your grave. Thats how I felt when we went into the barn. I didnt know what was wrong but I knew for sure something wasnt right.

It was Erimem who got it. She asked where Michael was. George made

a sort of tsk

noise and said that the boy had probably gone off to see President Lincoln even though hed been told he still had chores to do. The horses had been brought in and were tethered at the far end of the barn. As George hobbled over to get them for us, I looked at Erimem. She knew something was wrong, too. She was looking round the stable trying to work out what it was. To be honest, it just looked like a barn to me. Lots of wooden partitions breaking the barn into stalls and other little sections for holding hay and all the other equipment.

Then we heard George curse and stumble over something. He managed to catch himself before he fell and he said that he would take the leather to Michaels hide when he found the boy. He started brushing the hay and straw away from the obstacle with his hand. The way he said No; almost as if he was pleading, we both knew what hed found before we saw Michael lying under the hay with blood pouring from a gash on his head.

If he was breathing at all, it was so shallow that we couldnt see it. I said that we had to get out of the barn, but even as I said it, I already knew it was too late.

We heard the sound of the hammer being pulled back on a gun from the shadows of one of the stalls. Jubal Eustace walked out of the stall and that creepy lieutenant was right behind him as usual. They were out of uniform and their clothes were filthy from the ride. Eustaces gun was aimed straight at my head and he said what a delight it was to see us again. I couldnt take my eyes off the gun he was aiming at me. I didnt even see his other hand swing up until just before his punch hit my jaw. I didnt have time to move or duck. The next thing I knew I was sprawling in the hay and my head cracked on a wooden spar on one of the partitions. I heard Erimem shouting my name but she sounded like she getting further away. I thought I was going to pass out but I had a sort of fuzzy idea that if I did Id never wake up, so I struggled to stay conscious.

Extract ends

Letter from Will Johnson to Claire Bartlett Richmond, Virginia April 5th, 1865

Fifth extract

As soon as he learned that Peri and Erimem would probably be at Cassius Eldons house, the Doctor was heading for the door. The President stopped us briefly and offered the use of whatever troops we might require. While the Doctor was reluctant to accept the offer, I was happy to take as many soldiers as possible. If Jubal Eustace was indeed chasing the Doctors friends, I wanted as many guns as could be mustered by my side. Ultimately we reached a compromise of six troopers, which the President sent one of his aides to arrange. Before we left, President Lincoln shook each of us by the hand, Moses included. He thanked us and wished us well, then instructed me to return with news of the Doctors friends. He said that the Almighty was watching over his people on that day and that he was sure we would be successful.

He talks of God often. As he shook the Presidents hand, the Doctor held his grasp firm. Enjoy this time, I heard him tell Lincoln. Every moment of it. And then he released the Presidents hand and all but ran for the door, leaving the President behind with a most bemused look on his face. I had no idea why the Doctor acted in so strange a manner with the President, but nor did I have time to dwell on the matter.

The Doctor was already almost out of the house. Moses and I saluted the President and his staff then hurried after him.

For a man who had traveled the route from Eldons house only once and then in a most roundabout manner the Doctors sense of direction was remarkable. He led our party through the streets at a fair old lick. More than once people were forced to leap out of his path and we were forced to push our horses to their limits to keep abreast of him.

When we arrived at Eldons house, the first thing we saw were the two horses tethered outside the barn at the side of the house. I felt a great wave of relief. These would be the horses belonging to Peri and Erimem. I could tell nothing from the Doctors expression. I think he had no wish to raise his own hopes for fear that they might be dashed. But I was sure that these horses could mean only that his friends were safe.

And then we heard the single gunshot.

Extract ends

Extract from the audio-diary of Peri Brown Timeframe unknown Im still hazy about parts of what happened. Ive had to piece it together from what other people have told me as well as the bits I do remember. When Eustace knocked me down, George tried to pull a gun from inside his coat. I think he kept it tucked in the waistband of his trousers. He managed to get the gun out and clear of his jacket but Eustace was quicker. He shot only once. It was enough. George was hit square in the chest and he fell back, almost on top of Michael.

Eustace looked at me. There was so much hate in him, I knew he was going to kill me.

But then he lifted his pistol and aimed it at Erimem. I remember exactly what he said. I dont think Ill ever forget it. You like your nigger so much. How much will you like watching her die? He aimed his gun at Erimems chest and pulled the hammer back with his thumb. She knew she was going to die as well but she didnt flinch. She didnt even blink. She just stood straight and waited. She wasnt giving him the satisfaction of letting him see she was scared. Erimem was at least a foot shorter than Eustace but to me it seemed that she was looking down at him. He said, Im going to shoot that smug look off your face. I tried to stand up, to stop him but I was still dazed. Then I saw a flash of white run into the barn. I couldnt quite focus but I knew it was the Doctor. Who else dresses like that?

Id really rather you didnt shoot my friend, he said. He sounded out of breath, like hed been running. He has this way of being able to take in a situation almost instantly. Its so quick youd almost think he didnt have to look around. He does.

Hes just really quick about it.

I tried getting up but I was hit by another wave of dizziness. Eustace was looking at the Doctor. He must have recognised him from that day in the barn. Eustace shook his head in disgust and waved his pistol a little in Erimems direction. You call this your friend, Doctor Smith? You are Doctor John Smith, I take it? The Doctor said that hed had a lot of names, but Smith would do for now. Eustace started talking again. Even though the Doctor was there, he didnt seem worried or nervous. I dont know if it was because he and his lieutenant had the only guns on show or because he was crazy. If he

was insane enough to follow us all the way here for revenge, maybe he was insane enough not to be worried about anything. There is an irony that we should end thus, Doctor Smith, he was saying. In a barn, as we began. You saved a nigger in that barn and now you try to do the same here.

Im rather fond of Erimem, the Doctor said, and he smiled at Erimem, really quickly like he hoped nobody else would see him try to reassure her. And as for the man at the other barn, well, his name is Moses. Hes rather a nice chap. Weve become quite good friends, actually.

It was like the Doctor had thrown a switch in Eustace and hed just snapped. You cant befriend a nigger! Eustace yelled. Theyre property. No better than a plough or an ox! Would you try to make friends with an ox?

I would probably have backed off when Eustace cracked that way, but the Doctor didnt move and he kept his voice calm. If it was a choice between the ox and someone like you, I think I would try.

Eustace was shaking I mean really physically shaking with anger. Rage. He swung his gun away from Erimem and pointed it at the Doctors face. You disgust me. You insult me and you disgust me. You put niggers ahead of decent white folk.

I dont judge anyone, the Doctor said. He ignored the gun like it wasnt there.

Other than that I choose to spend my time with decent people, no matter the colour of their skin. And will you kindly stop using that disgusting word? There was a switch in the Doctors voice. Something cold, almost threatening was there. Something that said there was a dangerous side of the Doctor hiding under the surface. Ive seen him like that before. I think the idea of the Doctor having a dark side scares me as much as anything Ive seen.

Eustace was seething. He said, I disgust you, Doctor? He could barely control himself.

And the Doctor still stayed calm. You know, I rather think you do.

The more the Doctor stayed calm, the worse it got under Eustaces skin. He realised that he couldnt bully the Doctor or push him around. And I think that scared him. He had spent his whole life, beating and bullying people. Killing them, even. But I think it was inflicting fear that he enjoyed most and when he found someone who wasnt afraid,

no matter what he did, Im certain that scared Eustace. He said, I am going to enjoy killing you, Doctor.

The Doctor just shrugged like hed been told his cup of tea was going to be delayed by a few minutes. Perhaps. But death has no great fear for me. What about you, though? Are you ready to die? If you kill me, my good friend Moses will shoot you.

You certainly gave him enough reason the last time you met.

We had all been paying so much attention to the Doctor and Eustace that we hadnt noticed a soldier the same soldier who had passed us with the prisoner a few hours earlier sneak into the barn. I guess he must have used a side door or a window or something. He had his rifle aimed at Eustace. Eustace called to his lieutenant.

The Doctor carried on, And, of course, my other friend, Captain Johnson, will deal with your lieutenant if he should think about trying anything.

Another man a Union officer stepped out of the shadows, this time behind Eustaces lieutenant. His pistol was aimed straight at the back of the lieutenants head. He circled round, keeping out of arms reach until he could see the lieutenants face.

The lieutenant followed him with those dead eyes until he saw the Union captains face. That was the first time I saw some flicker of emotion, of anything like life in him. It might have been horror. Or maybe disgust. Im not sure. He dropped his eyes and stared at the floor.

And then the Union captain spoke. Paul?

Extract ends

Letter from Will Johnson to Claire Bartlett Richmond, Virginia April 5th, 1865

Sixth extract

The Doctors plan was so simple it sounded to me like suicide. He would march in the front door and keep Eustace busy while the rest of us found another way in. Moses knew of a window at the back they used for light and for bringing in feed. I told the six troopers to wait outside for word from me, then I had Moses lead me into the barn. It took only a few seconds for us to take in the scene. The Doctor was arguing with a tall, bearded man who had his pistol aimed at a small, colored girl of 16 or 17. Another young woman, this one white, was on the ground in the hay. She was clearly in some distress and blood was seeping from the side of her mouth. At a guess I would say she had been struck, most likely by the bearded man, who I took to be Eustace. I also assumed without question that these were the Doctors friends. Two more figures, both male and colored lay in the straw. Neither was moving so I figured them for dead. There was one more figure in the barn. He was standing in the shadows and I couldnt make him out clearly. Moses moved away, circling one way. I moved the other, round behind the man in the shadows.

By the time Moses was in position, the Doctor had already riled Eustace enough to have made him turn the gun from the colored girl Erimem I later found she was called, for these were indeed his friends and onto the Doctor himself. As soon as he saw Moses and I were ready, the Doctor told Eustace that it was over and that Moses already had a gun aimed at him. Eustace called for his lieutenant, but I had him covered and made myself known. The lieutenant did not move. He had flinched slightly when the Doctor had called me Captain Johnson.

It was Paul, all right. I knew it was from the moment I saw him. In truth, I think I had somehow always known it would be him. Our lives have been so tightly knit that I could not imagine that this would not be him. He saw me. He saw me and he recognized me. And then he could not look at me. At the time, I thought it was because he saw me as an enemy. Now, I think it was because he could not bear to see in my face the horror I felt at what he had become. I have never seen a man so changed, but I fear that the war has changed us all. It has changed our country. Our world. That change has come at a price, Claire. I could see in Paul that he had witnessed so much suffering in this war that his soul had been broken. I have seen a lot in this war.

Much of it, I would never think of recounting to you, my dear, for you have kept me strong. Would I have finished like Paul had it not been

for you?

Eustace yelled at Paul. He shouted at him to shoot me. When Paul did not make any move, Eustace yelled again, louder and with even more anger than before. I told him straight that Paul would not hurt me. It is your cousin, then? the Doctor asked and I agreed that he was. I felt compelled to see he in my answer when the Doctor had used the word it. In the great picture of things, it is a nothing and I am convinced the Doctor meant naught by it, but for myself and for Paul I had to say he. To say that Paul was a man, not a thing. Does that make sense to you?

Still Eustace yelled at Paul. He told Paul to shoot me, to kill me. That he was a coward, a disgrace to the Confederacy, to his family. Then the Doctor said quietly, He wont shoot Will, because Will is his family.

I tried talking straight to Paul. Its Will, Paul. You know its me. Thinking now, its kind of a stupid thing to say but it felt right for that time. Eustace yelled again for Paul to shoot me and indeed for the first time, I noticed that Pauls gun was still raised but I carried on. The wars almost over, Paul. Its done. Theres no need for more killing.

Pauls pistol still did not move, nor did his stare lift from the ground. Again, Eustace yelled for Paul to do his duty and kill me. His voice was becoming a scream.

I felt my own anger begin to boil over at this foul man Eustace and I understood how Eldon had come to call him crazy evil. I doubt if he had any interest in the cares of the South, only in the opportunity the war gave him to inflict misery. He enjoyed death. He enjoyed seeing people suffer. I did not want to think of the horrors Eustace had made Paul endure. I could see the scar on the side of Pauls face where I had heard Eustace had struck him and I could only wonder what other tortures he had inflicted on a man I think of as my brother. You did this to him. You turned him into this.

I believe the Doctor could see that I was nearing the end of my tether and he sought to finish it. He spoke louder and with authority to Eustace. Put your gun down, Colonel. Theres no way out. You already have one gun aimed at you. Six more are waiting outside. Theres no way out of this for you.

And still Eustace looked at the Doctor as if he were nothing. I have never seen such arrogance in a man. Surrounded by armed enemy soldiers and even as a rifle was aimed at his chest by a man who would gladly have given his soul to pull the trigger, Eustace sneered at

us. Damn the man, he had the gall to sneer at us. I will not surrender.

Even the Doctor was losing patience with Eustace. The war will be over in a week.

The Confederacy is finished.

The rage within Eustace exploded out of him. To Hell with the Confederacy! They are cowards and weaklings, running from your kind! he cried. If someone had told me at that time that Eustace was Satan himself I would have believed it. His eyes were wide and staring and bile poured out of him with every word he spoke. You are not fit to take me prisoner. I will not surrender to niggers or nigger-lovers who have turned their back on their own kind!

Both the Doctor and I began to respond in anger to Eustaces outburst but our reaction was the exact thing he had hoped for. We had let ourselves be distracted for the briefest moment and Eustace leaped on it. He spun around and his pistol cracked in his hand. Moses was as much surprised as we all were. He was thrown backwards as Eustaces bullet slammed into his shoulder. I was raising my gun to fire at Eustace when I saw that his pistol was already aimed at Erimem. And then there was a second shot.

Extract ends

Extract from the audio-diary of Peri Brown Timeframe unknown I didnt mean to kill him. I dont know exactly what I did mean to do. I dont think there was time for anything as thought out as a plan. I just sort of reacted. I was still kind of dazed and I couldnt quite concentrate. The Doctor says I had a mild concussion. Maybe. Sounds about right.

Id been trying to keep track of what was happening, but there were too many people speaking at once. The state it was in, my brain wasnt keeping track. I knew Eustace was getting angrier. He was shouting but the Doctor was staying calm. He was talking to an army captain, who seemed to know the freaky Confederate lieutenant. Eustace was losing control and he still had his pistol pointed at the Doctor.

I was on the ground near where George had fallen after Eustace had shot him. Georges pistol was just a few inches away from me and I picked it up. I hate guns. I cant begin to count the number of times Ive seen stories on the TV news about people being shot. I hate guns. But I picked this one up. I still dont know why, really.

When Eustace turned and shot the black soldier, it was so quick I didnt react. I didnt have time. But when he pointed his pistol at Erimem I just, I dont know, reacted. I wasnt trying to kill him. I didnt aim at him the gun was so heavy I couldnt have aimed it if Id tried. I think I meant to fire a warning shot. To stop him shooting Erimem. Im sure I was trying to scare him.

But the second I squeezed the trigger and the gun kicked in my hand, I saw dark red exploding out of the back of Eustaces head. It sprayed across Erimems face and clothes and across the Doctors white jacket. It didnt register straight away that Id killed Eustace, not until he dropped to his knees and toppled forward. His head swung to the side as he fell onto the ground and I could see the gaping hole in the back of his head where his brain had been. Blood and brains were oozing out of the hole in his skull.

I couldnt take my eyes away from Eustace. I didnt mean to kill him. I swear I didnt mean to do it. But it doesnt matter if I meant it or not. I shot him. I killed him.

Extract ends

Letter from Will Johnson to Claire Bartlett Richmond, Virginia April 5th, 1865

Seventh extract

For a long moment after Eustace fell face down in the straw nobody moved or spoke. I believe we were all too shocked by what had happened. Finally, the Doctor moved slowly towards Peri. She was kneeling on the ground with an ancient pistol in her hand. Her eyes seemed unfocussed and the weapon was waving alarmingly. The Doctor spoke to her, so soft and quiet that I could not make out any of the words but the tone was the way you or I might talk to a child in distress. He knelt beside Peri.

Taking the gun from her he flung it into a dark corner of the barn. He put an arm round the girls shoulders and raised her to her feet. The colored girl Erimem

joined him and helped Peri rise. She could not force her eyes away from Eustaces corpse and she continued to stare at it until the Doctor had led her from the barn.

Through all of this, Paul had barely moved, even though like most of us there present, he now carried some of Eustaces blood on him. Like Peri, his eyes were fixed on his dead commander. I told him it was over. That he had seen enough. I reached for his gun but he walked by me, our shoulders brushed as he passed me by.

Moses called to me. He was wounded to the shoulder but could still raise his rifle, which he now aimed at Paul. I told him not to fire. He began to argue but I repeated fiercely that he was not to fire. I had not waited so long to find Paul only to have him taken from me so soon. A third time I told Moses not to fire. Paul stood over Eustace for a moment then lowered his pistol and with great deliberation fired six shots into the body at his feet. It was not a frenzied attack and I am certain he knew that Eustace was dead. How could he think otherwise, even in his current condition? Then he turned and walked towards Moses. His limp was so much worse than I had thought. His left leg dragged behind him like a dead weight. He extended his gun-hand towards Moses. I did not speak. I knew I did not have to. Moses would surely know that after firing six times, Pauls gun would be empty. As he held out his hand, Paul let his grip on the gun slip and the pistol hung loose. He pushed the gun towards Moses, who took it from him. Three times, Paul began to speak but stopped himself. Finally, he did speak and it was little more than a whisper. I surrender.

Moses nodded that he accepted Pauls surrender and then Paul spoke

again, even quieter than before. Im sorry. He began to cry. His body shook with sobs and tears flowed down his cheeks as I have never seen in a grown man. I have known Paul all my life, Claire, and I never dreamed that I should see him so broken.

I held him and it was all I could do stop keep myself from weeping along with him.

The six troopers ran in and I told them to see to Moses and to help the other figures lying in the straw if anything could still be done for them.

I stayed with Paul until long after the troopers had helped Moses out. They told me that the elderly colored man who had been lying in the straw was dead but the teenage boy was alive and would recover in time. I could only hope that the same might be said for Paul.

I broke regulations and did not take Paul to jail or one of the prison camps.

Instead, I took him to the Empire Hotel, one of the places we had commandeered for army use. My intention had always been that Paul would not be arrested and I had told the Doctor of my determination to bring Paul to the hotel and so I was not surprised to find the Doctor already there when I arrived. He was talking with Erimem. She hurried off as soon as Paul and I arrived, saying that she should sit with Peri. I think it was more that she had no wish to be near Paul. The Doctor informed me that Peri had suffered a concussion and that she was now asleep in one of the rooms upstairs after he had given her a sleeping draught. He helped me take Paul upstairs and put him to bed. The Doctor chose a room which was, I found out later, a good way from the one in which he had placed Peri. Clearly he wished to keep them apart for now. I asked the Doctor if he would examine Paul. He suggested that I might prefer an army doctor but I insisted that he tend to Paul. More forcefully than I ought to have done if I am truthful, but I trust the Doctor and would not have been happy placing Paul in the hands of someone I did not know. His clothes were so filthy I sent them to be burned but once he was undressed I saw how badly the war had taken a toll on his body. He was so skinny I could count his ribs through the skin and his belly looked as if it had been caved in. His arms and legs had wasted so badly that both the Doctor and I were able to close our hands around his arms. His body was covered with bruises, many of which seemed fresh and which the Doctor concluded were in the shape of bootmarks. He did not say as much but we both knew that most likely Eustace had been responsible

for these beatings. The worst of Pauls injuries was a deep gash to the top of his leg the one he dragged behind him. I do not know if I can bring myself to describe the full horror of this wound to you. But I think I must tell you all that I saw, so that you might better understand how bad Pauls condition is. The wound was festering and smelled like old meat left to rot in the sun. Maggots and other insects crawled and moved inside the wound. The Doctor administered a sleeping draught to Paul before he began cleaning the wound, which he did with great gentleness and care. As he did so, I swear I could see inside Pauls thigh all the way to the bone. He said that the wound was weeks old and the infection was bad. Left untended, it would surely have killed Paul. The Doctor sent out for a bizarre mixture of flowers and herbs and roots, which he turned into some kind of poultice and then placed over the gash in Pauls thigh.

The Doctor spent the rest of the next day flitting back and forth between Pauls bedside and that of Peri. I am relieved I can tell you that she is recovering from her head injury. The Doctor is also mightily thankful. He spent an hour sitting with Paul while I obeyed the Presidents order to tell him of how we had fared. I met President Lincoln only briefly this time. He was aboard his ship and almost ready to return to Washington but still made a few minutes to talk. I did not have to tell him what had happened in the barn the previous day. He had already made it his business to find out. He also knew that I had taken Paul to the hotel but he did not condemn me for it. Instead, he again shook my hand in farewell and said only that little could be of more importance to a man than his family. I am sure I will not be punished for my actions. Indeed, I think the opposite may be closer to the facts of it. One of the Presidents assistants hinted as I may have a promotion in the near future. A promotion that would lead me to working in Washington when the end of the war is finally sealed. It is an interesting thought. I also find myself wondering how you would take to life in our capital.

But that is in the future. I am writing this letter sitting by Pauls bedside. He is sweating out a fever. The Doctor has given him another draught to make him sleep. He is hopeful that Paul will be much improved by morning. The Doctor himself is currently keeping a watch over Peri, having finally managed to persuade Erimem that she herself should take some rest. The girl has barely moved from Peris bedside since they arrived. Her affection and concern for Peri are both genuine and touching.

She is a most pleasant girl. The Doctor tells me she was royalty in her homeland and I can see it in the way she carries herself. When I met

her in the corridor today, she asked me how Paul was faring. Despite all that had happened, she was pleased that he was mending. The Doctor is fortunate to have such friends. As fortunate as I am to have you and Paul. He is my brother. You are my life.

I am not a one for romantic words and you are probably laughing yourself sore at me already, so I will stop now. You will, I feel sure, be eager to tell Abby that Paul is alive. I would not say that he is in good health but he is alive and for that alone we can be thankful.

I am enclosing three letters I found in Pauls possessions before I had his clothes taken away. I believe that some of the letters will explain why his mind has been so weakened. My father should be told of their contents. Telling him that Pauls family are dead would be a painful duty and if you do not feel you wish to do this, I do understand and will tell him in person when I can return home. That day will, I hope, be soon.

Despite all, I feel a confidence or perhaps hope is a better word that I have not felt in a long time. We have a great task ahead of us in rebuilding the country but with those we love around us friends, family, perhaps even husbands and wives, and with our President leading us, we can do it I am sure.

I have written long enough. You are in my thoughts always.

My love and respects are ever yours, Will

Extract from the audio-diary of Peri Brown Timeframe unknown
Apparently I slept off and on for the best part of two days. I dont remember anything about those two days at all. The Doctor gave me something to make me sleep and he told me later that Id had a slight concussion. I didnt find out till much later that whenever I had woken up, Erimem was there and a couple of times Id screamed at her to go away and leave me alone. She didnt leave or even move from my bedside for over a day and a half.

When I finally did come round properly my head was throbbing. Erimem was there. She looked exhausted. The Doctor sent her outside while he examined me. It seems he is a real doctor. He said something about having studied in Glasgow. He seemed pretty pleased with how I was doing but told me Id have to stay in bed a few more days.

He started to talk about the barn but I cut him off. I was sharp with

him. Probably too sharp, but I didnt want to talk about it. I didnt want to think about Eustace at all. I told him I was tired and he accepted that. He said that sleep was the best cure for me anyway.

When he left he said Erimem would come in to sit with me but I told him I didnt need her. He just nodded and said that since Erimem had spent the last day and a half sitting with me, she probably needed sleep as much as I did. That was fine by me. As long as I didnt have to see her. The trouble was that every time I closed my eyes I did see her. Her or Eustace.

It wasnt Erimems fault. She didnt ask for Eustace to hate her. Shes not responsible for someone else being crazy. She wasnt to blame for any of this. It wasnt her fault. But I couldnt bring myself to look at her. My mind just kept running the scene in the barn over and over and I couldnt stop it. Eustace would have loved it. Even after he was dead he was still hurting people.

Extract ends

From U.S. Grant to R.E. Lee Appomattox Court House, Virginia April 9th, 1865

General: In accordance with the substance of my letter to you of the 8th instant, I propose to receive the surrender of the army of Northern Virginia on the following terms, to wit: Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate, one copy to be given to an officer to be designated by me, the other to be retained by such officer or officers as you may designate. The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the government of the United States until properly exchanged; and each company or regimental commander to sign a like parole for the men of their commands. The arms, artillery, and public property to be parked and stacked, and turned over to the officers appointed by me to receive them. This will not embrace the side-arms of the officers nor their private horses or baggage.

This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to his home, not to be disturbed by United States authority so long as they observe their paroles and the laws in force where they may reside.

From R.E. Lee to U.S. Grant Headquarters, Army of Northern Virginia April 9th, 1865

General: I received your letter of this date containing the terms of the surrender of the army of Northern Virginia, as proposed by you. As they are substantially the same as those expressed in your letter of the 8th instant, they are accepted. I will proceed to designate the proper officers to carry the stipulations into effect.

President Abraham Lincoln Final Public Address, Washington, DC April 11th, 1865

We all agree that the seceded States, so called, are out of their proper relation with the Union; and that the sole object of the government, civil and military, in regard to those States is to again get them into that proper practical relation. I believe it is not only possible, but in fact, easier to do this, without deciding, or even considering, whether

these States have ever been out of the Union, than with it.

Finding themselves safely at home, it would be utterly immaterial whether they had ever been abroad. Let us all join in doing the acts necessary to restoring the proper practical relations between these States and the Union; and each forever after, innocently indulge his own opinion whether, in doing the acts, he brought the States from without, into the Union, or only gave them proper assistance, they never having been out of it.

Interview with former Private Aaron Eddowes Conducted April 17th, 1895

I was still in Libby Prison when word came that President Lincoln was dead. The guards expected me to cheer or show joy at the news. Instead, I cried. A week before, all I had wanted was to take the Presidents life and now I wept that Booth had killed him. I had tried to shoot Lincoln and he had saved me from a sure death at the hands of that crowd. How many men would have done that? And how many would have had no hate in their eyes for an enemy? No doubt he will have had his failings but I never met a man to match Lincoln.

Letter from Will Johnson to Claire Bartlett En route to Gable April 18th, 1865

My dearest Claire,

I cannot believe that President Lincoln is dead. I cannot. I spoke with the President scarcely a week ago. He had such plans and hopes for the future. Like all of us. I cannot force myself to believe that he will never see this country healed as he so dearly wanted and I cannot express how empty I feel at his death. Or the anger I feel about it. It is such a pointless waste. Nor can I believe that he died in such a manner, shot in the head by this actor, John Wilkes Booth. How could the Presidents bodyguards allow him to go alone to a theatre? No one I have met can understand how he could have been attacked so easily in the theatre. Did nobody challenge Booth as he went closer to the Presidents theatre box? Did they learn nothing from Richmond, when only the Doctors quick action saved the President? My anger at their failure almost matches my grief. I cannot begin to say how this has affected everyone. I doubt that it is any different at home. The joy and relief of the end of the war was been torn away from us. I grieve not

only for the death of this great man, but for our entire nation. This one death has affected me more than all of the others in this war.

When we are done with the clearing up of this war, then I am done with the army.

All my life, I wanted only to serve my country. But in serving my country, I have killed my countrymen. I have killed more men than I can count in performing my duty.

Is it not a terrible thing that I cannot remember the men, nor indeed how many men, that I have killed? No, I have worn this uniform long enough. As soon as I am permitted to do so, I will take off this uniform for the last time. I will never wear nor even look upon it again. I want no reminder of this damned war.

Maybe if President Lincoln were still alive, I would continue to serve. I saw him with people, whites and coloreds alike, and I would have followed in his footsteps wherever that may have led me. But President Lincoln is dead and with him passed any compulsion I still held to stay in the army. I talked with the Doctor on this subject as we rode back to Gable. He nodded and told me he had expected as much. As he said this to me, he cast his gaze to Paul, who has ridden with us in silence since we left Richmond. With the war over, he is out of uniform but his eyes remain dead. He has not spoken nor even acknowledged me since his surrender over a week ago. Instead, he just rides, his eyes on the ground, or staring ahead into space. My heart is breaking to see him so. He eats like an animal, barely chewing his food and in his sleep he twitches and contorts, often crying out as if some demon were after him in his dreams. God forgive me, at times I wish Peri had shot him also. Then at least, his terrors might be over.

But I would not wish the taking of another life onto Peris shoulders. She wears the same mask of horror as Paul. She is perhaps less affected but she is affected nonetheless. The Doctor has often told me of how close Peri and Erimem are. He described them as being as close as sisters once. Now she will not talk to anyone save the Doctor, and even he can gain only the smallest conversation from her. She will not talk to Erimem at all and I see how this affects the other girl. Yet I am sure Peri holds no malice towards her friend. I have seen her look at Erimem while we ride. The Doctor says that, if anything, he is sure she is seeking to justify her actions by making sure that her friend is still alive. I am no expert on such things, but I am inclined to believe the Doctor in this, as in fact I am inclined to trust his judgement in most things.

He tells me that he will not be coming into Gable with me. He has a carriage of some kind hidden outside of town. He says that he will use it to take Peri and Erimem to a place where he is certain that they can heal and recover. It is not a hospital or, God forbid, a lunatic asylum. Instead, he calls it a place of tranquillity. I have asked him if he would be willing to take Paul to this place as well. He is not taken with this idea but I am prepared to push and argue for him to do so. I believe that he can be persuaded. Erimem has spoken to him about this also. With her help I am sure the Doctor will agree to help Paul. In his heart, I know that is what he would want to do.

The Doctor said that a cure may take some time. I have invited him to a celebration at my home in July of this year. By then I hope to be out of this uniform and nothing more than the manager of a steelworks in a small Massachusetts town. But whether this celebration happens is entirely in your hands, my love. If you will still have me, my dearest wish is that you should do me the honor of becoming my wife. Paul has always been and will always be my brother but you have been my dearest friend as long as I can remember. Through this terrible war, you have been my rock. I doubt that I would have survived it but for you. I should, I know, do this on bended knee in your front parlor after gaining your fathers blessing but I am convinced he will give his consent if this is what you want. I pray that it is. I do not think I can imagine the rest of my life without you by my side. In truth, I would not want to try.

And now it is late and my eyes ache from writing this in the light from the fire. We will reach town tomorrow and I must still persuade the Doctor to help Paul. I think I will be successful. The Doctor is tending to Paul now as another of his dreams torments him. There is too much kindness in the Doctor for him to refuse. I hope that you and your family are well and if I am not being presumptuous, that I may hear good news from you soon.

My love always,

Will

Letter from Claire Bartlett to Will Johnson Diensberg, Massachusetts
May 5th, 1865

My Will,

Your letters arrived all together at one time. I have read them through over and over. The end of the war and the murder of President Lincoln have left us all bewildered. I do not think I can even begin to imagine how you must feel, having fought so long in the war and met the President so soon before his death. But you must try to take solace from the knowledge that President Lincoln led us to a victory which now gives us the opportunity to rebuild our country and our families.

I am relieved that Paul is alive and pray that his condition will improve. Your friend, the Doctor, sounds like a most capable fellow. If you believe that he can help Paul to recover, then that is enough for me. Abby fairly wept with joy when told that you had found Paul. I did not have the heart to tell her what the war had done to him. For her sake as much as his, I hope the Doctor will be successful.

I saw your father today and told him of Pauls family. He took the news badly. To live in hope for so long only to have it so cruelly taken away is a terrible thing for him to endure, especially so soon after losing your mother. But he was relieved to hear that you and Paul had survived and he is eager to see you both.

As for the other matter you raised, I spoke with my own father this afternoon and informed him that we were to be married, you and I. I did not ask his permission, nor did I say that you would call to ask his blessing. I told him only that we would be wed as soon as could be arranged. We have known each other too long for an extended courtship and this war has already taken too much of our lives. If it is still your wish, we can be married when next you are home. You need only let me know when you shall be here and I shall see to the arrangements. Your only duty will be to ensure that you are not late for the ceremony. This should not be too difficult a task, even for a slugabed like yourself, for your father has already insisted that the wedding take place in your house. More than anything, I am sure he wants to hear music and laughter in his home again.

Both our fathers seem pleased enough by the news. Indeed, both claim

they saw it coming some many years ago. My own father said that he looks forward to having a son again.

I do not know if your intent is still to leave the army or whether it was the shock of the Presidents death talking. Whatever you choose, I shall be by your side. I belong nowhere else.

I pray that you are safe and well.

Your loving Claire

Audio-diary of Erimem Timeframe unknown

How does this work? Do I sit and talk to an empty room? That is silly. The Doctor said that my words would be copied but I do not see any devices for doing that. Is my voice being copied?

<<pause for playback>>

That is extraordinary. My voice does not sound as I thought it does. I sound much younger than I had expected. But the Doctor did say that everyone thinks they sound younger when they hear themselves speak. I must ask him how this device works.

But I will do that later. Now, I am troubled by Peri. I had hoped she would be in here. She has not been herself since we left Richmond. Killing Eustace has affected her and she has withdrawn away from the Doctor and me. She speaks very little and eats even less. I have spoken with the Doctor about it and he is sure that Peri is trying to deal with the fact that she killed a man. He says that it is not an easy thing for her to accept. He talks with such sadness that I think he may have had to kill many times but has hated doing so every time.

But I do not understand this. I have killed people. In the battle at Giza, when my army fought against Yamss mercenaries, I killed many mercenary soldiers with my spear or my sword. I feel no shame in that and I have no difficulty in accepting that I did so. We were at war and they would have killed my people. Here, Peri and I had landed in a war and we had been forced to take a side. What is so wrong about killing an enemy in that situation? I would have done the same as Peri did and I am sure I would have felt no grief had I been the one who killed Eustace. Perhaps it is because we are from such different times. Peri has told me often that her home can be violent, despite the advances people have made. So surely she must be used to the killing? The Doctor has said that because Peri and I are from different times and places some of our values will be different. That may be true. It does make sense but now my concern is solely for Peri. According to the Doctor, Paul, the soldier who was with Eustace, is suffering from a worse case of the same thing as Peri. I could not bear for her to fall into that state, especially because of me. She is my friend and I love

my friend too much to let that happen. I must talk with her now. I need to talk with her.

Extract from the audio-diary of Peri Brown Timeframe unknown Ive no idea where the Doctor had the TARDIS take us. It might have been Earth or, then again, maybe it was somewhere else. It didnt matter. It was peaceful. It looked kind of like I imagined the West had looked before it was settled. A wide open prairie with mountains covered with trees in the distance and a river passing by the mountains picking up the snow that melted off the mountain peaks in the sun. The sun or a sun at any rate was pretty high in a blue sky and the grass underfoot was thick and green and moved a little in what breeze there was. I guessed that wherever we were, it was their version of late spring, almost summer. It felt like morning.

When wed reached the TARDIS, Id gone straight through the control room and locked myself in my room. Erimem and the Doctor both tried to talk to me but I ignored them when they knocked. I didnt want to see them. I didnt want to see anyone. Especially Erimem. I wasnt angry with her. I didnt hate her or anything like that. How could I hate her? But I hated what Id done and every time I looked at her, I remembered that Id killed Eustace. Every time I saw her, the fact that Im a murderer came back to me. Im a murderer. I killed someone. The worst of it was, I would run it all around in my head and I could justify to myself why Id done it. And I think that was worse than the killing itself. I hated that Id taken someones life, but I hated even more that I was able to accept that maybe Id been right to do it. Or if not right, I had to accept that I hadnt had any alternatives. So why couldnt I get the image of Eustace with half of his skull blown off out of my mind?

A while after the TARDIS landed, I slipped outside. I didnt want to be cooped up in my room where they could find me. There hadnt been anybody in the control room, so Id been able to get out without having to answer any questions. Erimem would probably be asleep, and the Doctor? Who knows what the Doctor does when everybody else is in bed? He doesnt sleep much. He claims he doesnt have to.

Id been outside for a couple of hours, sitting on a fallen tree when the TARDIS door opened and Erimem came out. She was carrying a mug and came over to join me at the tree. She looked uncomfortable and held the mug out to me. She said she thought I might be cold so shed brought me some coffee. I took the mug and I think I nodded my

thanks. I didnt drink the coffee Erimem makes the worst coffee. We didnt speak for a while after that. Erimem wasnt just uncomfortable, she was feeling miserable and trying to work out something to say as well. She gets this little crinkle between her eyes when shes doing that. I didnt want her to be so unhappy but I didnt know what I could do about it.

Eventually, she spoke. It was like shed taken a deep breath and decided to just get it all out in the open. You killed Eustace, she said. I know it has caused you a great deal of pain, but I am not sorry that you killed him. She sat down beside me.

We watched some local animal something between a cat and a rabbit try to catch hand-sized butterflies a little further down the prairie. It was easier than looking at each other. Erimem carried on. He was an evil man. He enjoyed hurting people and he took pleasure in killing them. He did not fight in the war because he believed in his country. He fought so that he could hurt and kill as much as he wanted. She stopped, just for a second, long enough to take my hand. I tried to pull my hand free but she wouldnt let go. He would have enjoyed killing me. Peri, I know you didnt want to kill him, but he tried to kill me twice. Both times you saved my life. And then she really squeezed my hand so hard I thought she was going to break something and she said, Thank you for my life.

Erimems only 17. Shes got her life out there waiting for her. I think itll be a great life. I couldnt have let someone like Eustace take that from her. I didnt know what to say. Youre welcome wouldnt have cut it. So I hugged her and she hugged me back. One of us started crying. Dont ask me who, but whoever started it set the other one off. I dont cry. Not ever. I hadnt cried since my Dad…well, since my Dad. Erimems not like that either. Were not weak, weeping girlies. If we have a problem well deal with it. But I think we both needed to let go. Wed both been through so much that we had to release it somehow. So we did. I hate to think what we looked like. We must have been a terrible sight, blubbering like that. But it doesnt matter. The Doctor says it was an important part of coming to terms with what had happened and starting to heal.

He came out of the TARDIS after a while. He hummed and hawed about interrupting. He was a bit uncomfortable but just for a second he had half a smile on his face. I used to think he was uncomfortable with people being emotional because he didnt understand those feelings. Now I think its because he understands them maybe too well, but he can be so difficult to read. Hes complicated. But who isnt? He

was polite enough not to mention that Erimem and I must have been puffy-eyed, tear-streaked messes. I have a small errand to run, he said. I was wondering if you two would be all right here for a few minutes.

I nodded and Erimem said that we would be fine. She said that we were both going to be fine. She was right. Id never forget what I did to Eustace but Id survive. Id get through it and Id get over it. The healing had started already.

The Doctor seemed happy enough and said that hed be back before we knew he was gone.

He started back to the TARDIS then stopped. You are both all right? he asked. He cares. He really does care about people.

Erimem pretended she was outraged that he was treating us like children but she couldnt stop herself from laughing. I just waved a hand and told him to go do whatever it was he had to do. He said hed see us in a while and disappeared into the TARDIS. A few seconds later, it vanished with that weird grating metal sound. We decided that wed better scare off that cat-rabbit thing before it wiped out half the local butterfly population. We hadnt even gone twenty yards when the TARDIS

rematerialized exactly where it had been before. The door opened and the Doctor came out. He looked a little different. His hair was longer and he looked tired. Hed been gone for what? Ten seconds, our time? I wondered how long it had been for him. He smiled and waved, and then gestured for somebody else to come out of the TARDIS. A tall, young blonde guy around his mid-twenties at a guess

came out after him. He was dressed in clothes from around the Civil War time. He seemed kind of shy and edgy as the Doctor led him down to join us and I noticed that he had a slight limp. It took a long while before I realized that it was Eustaces lieutenant. He was cleaned up, his hair cut short and that filthy beard was gone. But sure enough, the scar was there on the side of his face just beside his eye. It had started to fade but it looked like hed always have it. The biggest difference was in his eyes. The dead look was nearly gone from them. Not completely. I could see that a little of it was still in there, but only a little. The Doctor introduced him as Paul LeVal and then introduced Erimem and me.

Paul said that wed met before but Erimem cut him off. She said, I am

sure we have never met before, but I am pleased to meet you now. And then she threw me a quick glance. Wed both seen the guilt in Pauls face when the Doctor had brought him over.

I knew a brief exposure to the war had affected me. How bad must the war have been to Paul for him to have gone the way he had? Id half heard the Doctor talking to his Union captain friend about Paul. I hadnt been paying much attention

Id been thinking about myself at the time but if even half of what Id heard was true Im amazed that he had recovered even this much.

I asked the Doctor about Paul a little later. I wondered why he had been able to help Paul when he couldnt do anything so save President Lincoln. He just shook his head and looked kind of sad. He liked Lincoln. You could tell in the way he talked about him. We cant change history, he said. Not one line. But perhaps we can tweak it a little and change a few lives for the better. I wonder if he thought that seeing Paul recover would help me get through my problems, too? If thats what he was thinking, it worked. Im glad Paul is recovering.

I shook his hand and told him I was always happy to meet new people. I figured that if I deserve the chance to get on with my life then so does he. He knew what we were doing and played along, apologising for his mistake and saying it was a pleasure to meet us now.

The Doctor said Splendid! that way he does and clapped his hands together. Then he said that we had an engagement to keep and that we should be on our way. There was a wedding wed been invited to. We would have to get Paul back for that. And it would be fun the dancing, the food and just think of the dresses we could wear. We would have so much fun raiding the TARDIS wardrobe. What can I say? Sometimes its good to cut loose and dress up. I was looking forward to the wedding.

But I wasnt ready to leave. It was a little too soon. Erimem knew that. Maybe the Doctor thought he had been away for longer, in our time, than he really had been.

Erimem asked if we had to go so soon. She put on the big-eyed, pleading, Bambi look.

Its the same one I used to use with my Dad. I think every little girl

uses it some time or other. It never fails. The Doctor didnt stand a chance. Oh, all right, he said. Why not? We did come here to relax for a while. And the thing about having a time machine is that we need never be late for anything.

As Erimem and I walked together down the hill, we shared a kind of secret laugh

conspirators whod put one over on the Doctor. I wonder if this is what having a sister is like? I hope so.

Extract ends

Acknowledgements

So this is the bit where I get to thank people or throw blame at them. It depends if you liked the book or not. If you did like it, thanks go to these people. If you hated the book, then its all their fault and I suggest that you blame this lot: Claire Bartlett for the use of her name and for all the good advice. Kenny Smith and Morris Heggie for letting me borrow their names as well. By the way, even though Ive borrowed the names of some friends for a few characters, the characters are in no way based on real people. Just thought Id point that out. Dan, Digs and Ferg for all the laughs. Keith Robson for vast amounts of help. Mary Duffy for making books fun.

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About The Author

Since being forcibly turfed out of school, screaming and kicking, at the age of 18, Iain McLaughlin has earned a living working on various D.C. Thomson comics including the Beezer, the Beano and now the Dandy, where the unsuspecting management has made him assistant editor. He was one of the villains responsible for trying to pension off Desperate Dan in the 1990s but hopes theyve made things up by now. In fact he introduced Dan to his current girlfriend.

Hes written a couple of Doctor Who audio stories and is, at least in part, responsible for many heated disagreements about how long the gap between Planet of Fire and The Caves of Androzani really is and whether or not another companion could really have fitted into that gap, which has pleased him no end. Hes like that. A bit of a git, really.

Long-term ambitions include writing a thriller, winning the lottery, seeing Dundee United go through an entire season without causing him to lose the will to live at least once and most of all, working out how the DVD player works. Oh, and if Scotland could manage to sneak in winning the world cup thatd please him no end, too.